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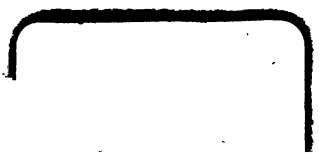
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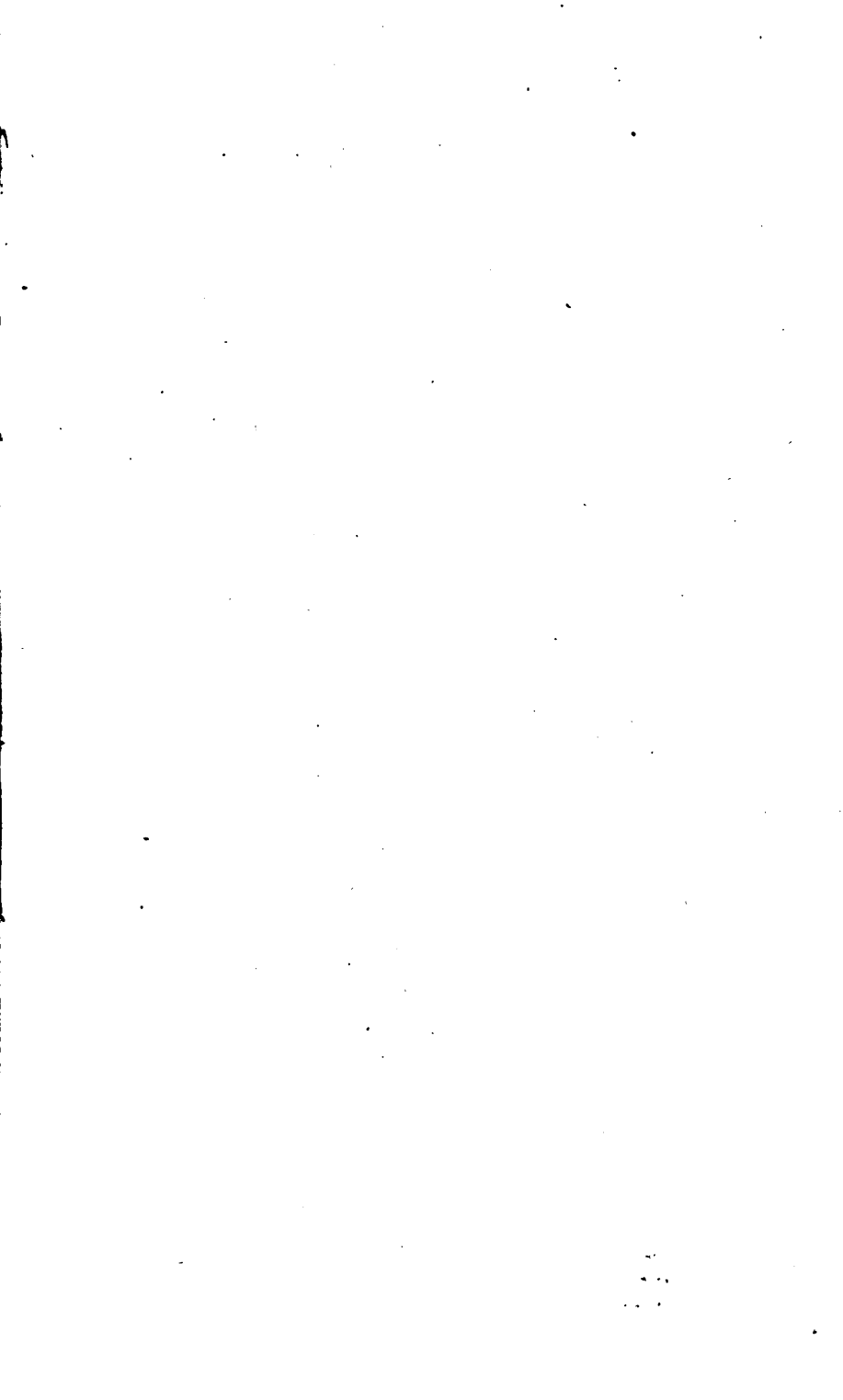
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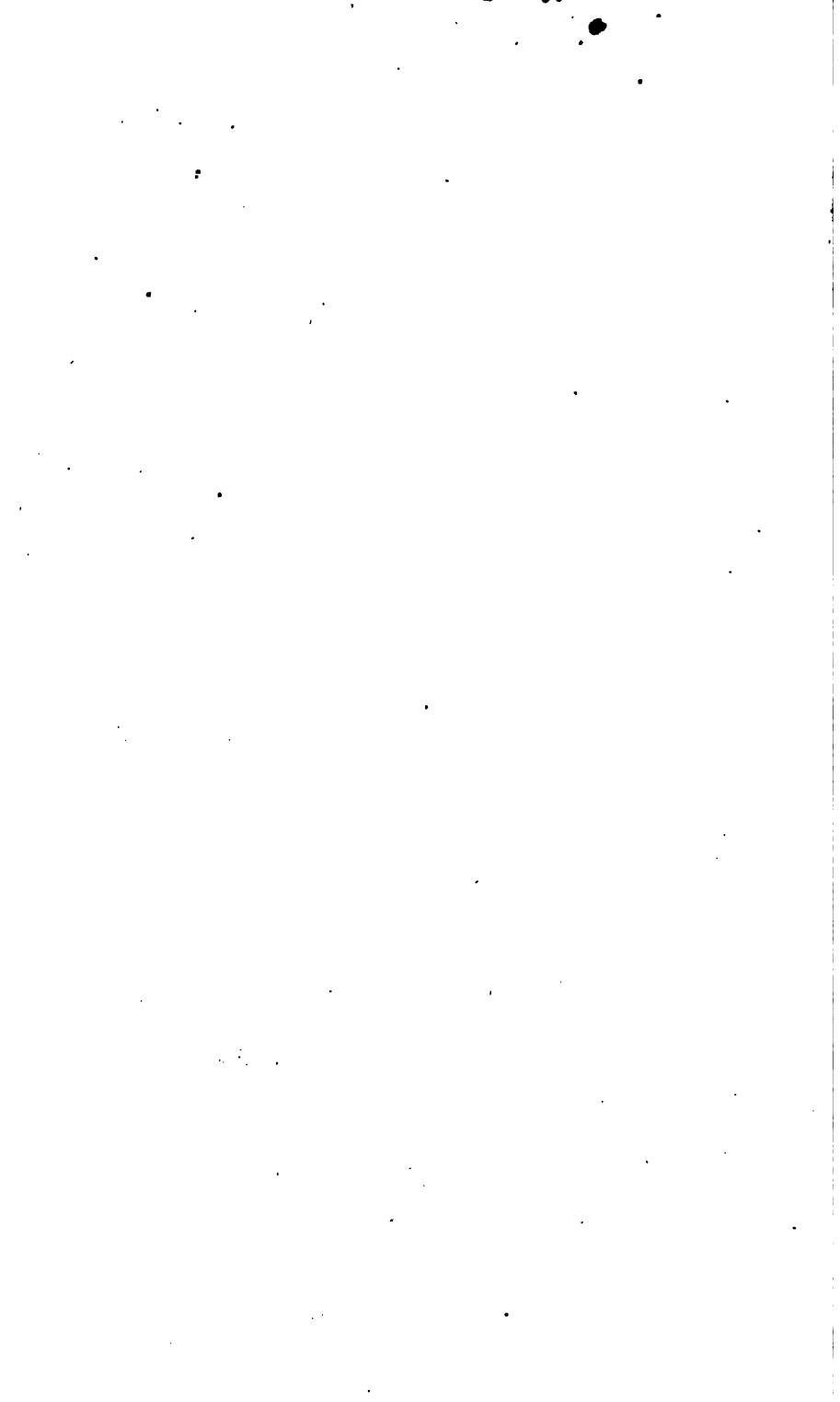
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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
REIGN OF GEORGE III.
TO THE
TERMINATION OF THE LATE WAR.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A VIEW OF THE PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLAND,
IN PROSPERITY AND STRENGTH, TO THE
ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

By ROBERT BISSET, LL.D.
AUTHOR OF THE "LIFE OF BURKE," &c. &c.

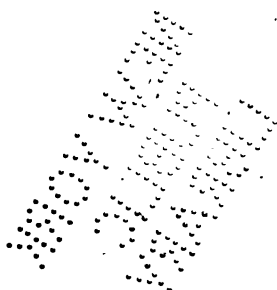
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THE event which rendered the year 1789 most important to Britons and all the civilised world, was the French revolution, the causes and means of which extraordinary change it requires a retrospective view of the scene of operation to investigate and comprehend. The government of France was, in the earlier ages, one of those feudal aristocracies, which the northern conquerors established over Europe. The degree of civil and political liberty that extended to the commons was very inconsiderable in France, as in most other countries, except England and the Netherlands. The power of the king in the middle ages was extremely limited; the country consisted of a collection of principalities, in each of which the lord superior enjoyed an arbitrary sway, and held

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the people in a condition of abject vassalage. This state of relative power in the vicissitudes of human affairs underwent material changes. The kings had one general object, diminution of baronial authority: prudence required the barons to unite for their common advantage, yet they had respectively separate interests which much more constantly occupied their attention. By sowing discord between these turbulent chieftains, the sovereigns rendered their aggregate force less formidable. Conquests, escheats, or treaties, united several fiefs to the crown: Louis XI. considerably reduced the power of the nobility, the feudal aristocracy was entirely destroyed by cardinal Richelieu, and the separate sovereignties were consolidated into one entire mass *. As the people had been without liberty under feudal lords, they continued to be in servitude under the monarch: before the total reduction of the aristocracy, they had indeed possessed an assembly of states, but so modelled, that the commons had little real share of the power: the nobles and clergy were closely connected by immunities and other privileges, and could easily overpower the third estate. From the administration of Richelieu, France had been without even the appearance of a legislative voice; every privilege of the subject was under the control of a government habitually corrupt and tyrannical. The men of wealth and distinction were purchased either by courtly honours, presents, pensions, or a lavish waste of the public revenue, which was endeavoured to be exclusively wrung from the

* See Introduction to this History.

grasp of the poor, the weak, and the laborious. Liberty and even life were insecure, if either interfered with the will of the prince. Instead of making a part subservient to the whole; estimating either permanent regulations, or temporary measures, by the aggregate of happiness which they were calculated to produce; the old government of France administered the whole according to the pleasure and caprice of a very small part; the comfort and welfare of twenty-four millions was of little account when compared with the freak or fancy of the prince, the interest or inclination of his favourites. The suggestion of a priest or a prostitute would desolate a whole province*, and drive from that country its most industrious inhabitants. The nobility and clergy, and also the magistrates, were exempted from their share of the public burdens; the taxes, instead of being paid by the rich and the great, fell upon the poor. These tyrannical exactions were rendered more cruelly oppressive by the established mode of extortion; the revenue was farmed, and farther leased by the principal undertakers to others, and by these to subordinate collectors with advance of rent; in the various steps of intermediation between the payer of the impost and the government, much greater sums were squeezed from the commons than ever found their way to the public treasury. The farmers of the revenue principally constituted the monied class, or at least, were the greatest capitalists†; in them government had its chief resource for loans to carry

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* See in Rander's Tour through Germany, an account of the devastation of the Palatinate.

† Annual Register, 1787 and 1789.

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Character
and spirit of
France un-
der Louis
XIV. and
XV.

on the projects of extravagant ambition, and infatuated aggression. Many of the nobility from their prodigality were poor notwithstanding their immunities and donatives, and from these men had the means of supply; the court, therefore, very readily connived at most flagrant extortions in the administration of the revenue, as the commons only were to suffer by the spoliation.

The old government of France was, no doubt, liable to these and other objections, both in its principles and practice; and in the reigns of Louis XIV. and XV. it was a very arbitrary and oppressive system. Its vices appeared the more glaring to political observers, by being contrasted with the constitution of the neighbour and rival of France. Perhaps, indeed, this circumstance produced to that system still less estimation than it really deserved. To Britons it would have been an intolerable scheme of policy, and must have crushed the energy of the British character, which in a great measure results from civil and political liberty; but a greater or less degree of restraint is necessary according to the knowledge and dispositions of a nation as well as an individual. The French minds, sentiments, and habits, appeared to require a stronger curb than the British; but on the other hand the authorities which were to control the violence, regulate the vivacity, and guide the versatile instability of the Gallic character, were by no means well placed. The power was not exerted for rendering the greatest benefit to the subjects which even their tempers would admit; it was much more arbitrary than was expedient for a civilized people to tolerate. The great mass of the

common were in a state of slavery to the priests, the nobles, and the officers of the crown*; such a condition only profound ignorance, fear, or infatuation could suffer. It was natural for intelligent and ingenious men to see the imperfections of the arbitrary government, and to wish for a reform of various abuses. The splendid actions of Louis XIV. notwithstanding their real impolicy, dazzled his subjects; his ostentatious displays to other nations of his superiority so flattering to the predominant vanity of the French character, rendered them eager partisans of their great monarch. Instrumental to the glory of the sovereign; they thought they were promoting their own! Vanity assumed the disguise of honour; and in gratifying the prince, and courting his approbation, they overlooked their own condition; they forgot they were bearing slavery, encountering war, poverty, and starvation, merely as puppets in the hands of a vain-glorious tyrant†. Under Louis XIV. their subserviency was very abject, but it arose from causes that could not be permanent, and, indeed, from a certain operation of passions and energies, which, in another direction, might readily attempt, and powerfully affect the dissolution of their fetters. Submission to arbitrary power arises from various causes, and operates differently according to the diversities of national characters; often it may proceed from barbarous ignorance and intellectual debasement, which mindful of only animal wants thinks not of any higher

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Sources of
submission
to arbitrary
power.

* New Annual Register, 1789.

† Smollett's Continuation of Hume, vol. i.

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enjoyments than the supply of these*; a phlegmatic temper that does not feel injustice and oppression; or from relaxation, indolence and timidity, which, notwithstanding a knowledge of right, and a feeling of wrong, prevents strenuous efforts for vindication and redress; servitude in these cases is a *passive principle*. The French were very far from being void of knowledge, sensibility, courage, or active exertion: on the contrary, they were intelligent, ardent, bold, and enterprising, but their passions engaged their ingenuity and their force in supporting and aggrandising their absolute monarch. Submission to arbitrary power in them ^{arose from} love for the sovereign, a **STRONGLY ACTIVE PRINCIPLE**; theirs was implicit obedience yielded by strength, not despotism forced upon weakness. The French animation was extremely eager in the pursuit of pleasure as its levity was very fond of pageantry and shew. The magnificent profusion of Louis and his court was well adapted for increasing the popularity acquired by political and military achievements; the high admiration, or rather the adoration with which his subjects regarded this monarch, soon excited in their warm and enthusiastic minds an ardent affection for the whole royal family, and indeed all the princes of the blood; they associated the ideas of estimation for royalty with military prowess. These effects were, as long as they lasted, very favourable to the continuance and extension of absolute sway, but the causes were perfectly compatible with totally different sentiments.

* As in the case of the negroes, see Park's Travels, passim.

Under Louis XV. the French long continued ardent in loyalty, and manifested their affection and reverence for the kingly name in implicit obedience to the mandates of his most christian majesty; but while energy was exerting itself in the boldest enterprize for promoting the great monarch's glory, props of his power were beginning to be impaired. From the middle of his reign the Roman catholic faith commenced its decline, and towards the close the political power of the sovereign received a considerable shake.

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Commencing and progressive change under Louis XV.

Beginnings of infidelity.

The abandoned debauchery of the court under the duke of Orleans's regency had prepared the higher ranks for the infusion of infidelity which was afterwards so extensively received. The first movers of this scheme of irreligion were certain votaries of literature; who employed men of high rank as their instruments. Learning became daily more prevalent in Europe, and having been fostered in France by the ostentatious vanity of Louis XIV. though limited during his reign to subjects of taste, sentiment, and natural philosophy, afterwards extended to theology, ethics, and politics. Voltaire was admirably fitted for impressing the susceptibility, gratifying the taste, amusing the fancy, inflaming the passions, and so misleading the judgment of lively, refined, ingenious, ardent, and volatile readers and hearers: he, therefore, was thoroughly skilled in the most effectual means of attacking the faith of Frenchmen. Vanity materially assisted the infidel's operations: the nobility having imbibed under Louis XIV. a relish for literature and still more for literary patronage, were

Voltaire.

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desirous of cultivating, or appearing to cultivate, intimacy with a man of so high rank in letters, repeated his doctrines and witticisms, and abandoned their religion to pass for philosophers. Besides, the debauchery of Louis XIV., carried by his pupil the duke of Orleans to a much more profligate excess, and not much corrected under the mature age of Louis XV., established in the morals of courtiers a powerful auxiliary for spreading infidelity. The ridiculous absurdity of many of the popish doctrines was easily discernible to French sagacity when turned to such animadversions; and their various mummeries afforded scope to the French wit and satire, when permitted to take such a range. Gallic ingenuity could easily find arguments to expose the frivolity and folly of many of their priestly doctrines, rites, and observances; but as ardent as versatile, leaving their superstitions, they took the opposite and much more dangerous extreme. Some of the king's ministers, pleased with the theories of the Voltaire school, and converted by his jokes, became deists, made the king inimical to various parts of the ecclesiastical establishment, and inspired him with a desire of reforming the church. This reform both in France and other countries arose partly from a diminished regard for the established church, but principally from the love of plunder: its consequences were a degradation of the clerical character to a much lower state than was requisite for the purposes of spiritual and moral instruction. The suppression of the religious orders, and the general system of policy towards the church, from the
peace

peace of Paris to the end of the duke de Choiseul's administration tended very powerfully to second the efforts of deistical writers against the church. Indeed the of acts Louis XV. at the instigation of his favourites, were powerfully efficient causes, though not the proximate, of the downfall of religion in the reign of his successor. It is by no means a difficult undertaking for a man of genius to establish a new sect in religion or politics: if he mean to mislead the judgment, he has only by animated description to impress the imagination, or by impassioned eloquence to impel the affections *. Voltaire was very successful in the use of these instruments: other literary adventurers readily pursued a tract leading so directly to esteem and patronage. Under such influence, projects and institutions were formed for circulating their doctrines. By such influence, projects, and institutions†, infidelity made very rapid advances; except in the lower classes of people, in the latter period of the reign of Louis XV. the majority of laity in France were deists. Opinions and sentiments so inimical not only to absolute monarchy, but to every form of regular government, are indebted for their disseminations to the imbecility of Louis XV., and the narrow views of his ministers. The same spirit of free inquiry not being properly understood or wisely modified by the court of France, from exposing the absurdities of many

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* Whitfield, Wesley, and other adventurers of a more recent date clearly and strongly illustrate the facility with which ingenuity fashioning itself to the fancies and passions of men, may impress a new hypothesis of religion.

† See Barruel on Jacobinism, vol. i. *passim*.

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Commence-
ment of an-
timonarchi-
cal doctrines.

popish observances proceeded to attack christianity itself, and soon extended to politics. In their efforts against superstition, the philosophers, in the violent ardour of the French character, rushing to the opposite extreme, pulled up the wheat as well as the tares; the same operators, employed on the same materials, using a similar process in politics, produced similar effects; and in both, seeking to avoid one evil, without discriminating it from the good in which it was mixed, they incurred a greater. Speculating upon the rights and happiness of man, they easily saw that the government of France was very far from being well adapted to the security of rights or the diffusion of happiness. The ingenuity of Frenchmen has, in most subjects of study, exhibited itself much more frequently in framing hypotheses than in collecting facts, investigating principles, and deducing consequences from actually established premises. This mode of procedure, well adapted to the poet's invention, was employed in cases which required the reasoning of the philosopher, and the wisdom of the sage. A position was assumed by Helvetius and many others, but above all by Rousseau, that man was a perfectible being, and that every change of system was to be adapted to the perfection which he might attain. While Voltaire and his sect were labouring to undermine existing establishments, Helvetius, Rousseau, and their sects, besides rendering a helping hand to the scheme of demolition, were very active in proposing new models totally impracticable, because to consist of perfect men, materials no where found to exist. The French statesmen were equally blind

Rousseau
supposes
man a per-
fectible be-
ing,

to

to the probable consequences of the political as of the theological theories so prevalent towards the close of Louis XV.'s reign. Then was the time* to have prevented their destructive effects by gradual and progressive melioration of church and state, which both demanded correction. The systematic impolicy of France in seeking commercial and maritime aggrandisement by provoking that nation that can always ruin her trade and crush her navy, tended very powerfully to give a practical operation to the spirit of liberty. The immense expence incurred in the seven years war, causing fiscal derangements, was the chief source of those contentions with the provincial parliaments that principally distinguished the last years of Louis XV. The actual opposition of these political bodies was perfectly justifiable, but called into action the prevailing theories, and paved the way for much more unrestrained efforts against the prince's power. Louis XVI., kind and liberal by nature, was disposed to moderate in its exercise the rigour of his absolute power, and to accommodate his government to the sentiments which, without comprehending their precise nature or extent, he in general saw become prevalent among his subjects. The first years of his

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Co-operating
political
causes,

General im-
policy and
burdensome
expence of
the French
wars against
Britain.

* So early as the year 1772, Edmund Burke, in the theological scepticism and political hypotheses of the French writers, saw the probable overthrow of religion and government; and even in the house of commons mentioned his apprehension of the danger, and proposed to form an alliance among believers against (he said) those ministers of rebellious darkness who are endeavouring to shake all the works of God established in beauty and order.

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Enormous
expences
and dis-
tressful con-
sequences of
the war to
support the
Americans.

Pecuniary
embarrass-
ments.

reign promised popularity to the prince with increasing happiness to his people. Repetition, however, of the same preposterous policy which had cost France so much blood and treasure, not only drove him to an unprovoked war with England, but to a war in which he was to support revolting subjects against their sovereign in which every argument that he could adduce in favour of the Americans might be employed with much greater force to vindicate a revolt of his own subjects. The intercourse of the French with the defenders of a republican constitution very rapidly increased an antimonarchical spirit in a country predisposed for its reception. The enormous expences incurred in nourishing America, and endeavouring to injure Britain, plunged France into unexampled distress, and the aggression recoiled on the aggressor. An immense new debt was added to the old, the accumulation became intolerable. The multitude of the distinct loans which altogether composed this vast mass of debt, and the diversity of the conditions upon which, according to the genius of the respective projectors, they had been raised, the numberless appropriations of specific revenues to particular funds, and the frequent infractions of these to supply the immediate necessities of the state, occasioned such voluminous detailed accounts, such endless references *, explanations, and deficiencies, with such eternal crowds of figures, that the whole presented a chaos of confusion, in which the financiers themselves seemed scarcely less bewildered than

* See Annual Register, 1787, chap. vii.

the public. The taxes, numerous as they were, and ruinous in the last degree to the people, were totally unequal to the supply of the current expences of the state and to the discharge of the interest of annuities arising on the various funds; new funds could not be raised, but the exigencies of the state must be supplied. No effectual means were devised, but by withholding the annuities due to the public creditors to the amount of the deficiency. This measure involved numbers in distress and calamity, and caused loud clamours: in a situation so disastrous, projects and projectors of relief multiplied. The wealth of France was certainly very great, but the principal was in the private repositories of ministers, contractors, commissioners, stock-jobbers, farmers general, and the minions of the court.

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Schemes of
extrication,

Vergennes died in 1786, and was succeeded by Monsieur de Calonne, who having in vain tried the experiment of new loans, the king proposed to assemble the states, but was dissuaded by the court and ministry. If the states were assembled, they might, instead of granting supplies, begin their deliberations with demanding a redress of grievances. Monsieur de Calonne wished to convene the Notables, an assembly deriving its name from the members being men of rank and respectability. The ministers had endeavoured to prevail on the nobility and clergy to contribute a share spontaneously of those immense sums which through their exemptions they were presumed to have accumulated. The same influence, it was also hoped, would be successfully used in prevailing on the great monied capitalists to bring

Convention
of the Nota-
bles.

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bring forward part of their stores for the relief of the nation. A proclamation was accordingly issued the 16th of December for holding this assembly *.

Calonne.

In an introductory speech Calonne contended that the public embarrassment arose from causes which were highly honourable to France, and the present reign, and, notwithstanding the immediate exigency, ultimately beneficial as well as glorious. A marine had been formed infinitely more powerful than any ever known in France; his majesty's fleets had sailed triumphant over the ocean, he had humbled the rival, and terminated an honourable war by a solid and permanent peace: devoting his attention to the public welfare, he had, since peace was established, invariably pursued extensive commerce abroad, and good administration at home. The minister had found the finances, when he was entrusted with their management, in a deplorable state; a vast unfunded debt, all annuities and interest greatly in arrear; all the coffers empty, the public stocks fallen to the lowest point, circulation interrupted, and all credit and confidence destroyed. He then shewed the measures which he had pursued, and the happy effects they had produced (so far as his measures could reach)

He unfolds
the dreadful
state of the
finances;

* It consisted of seven princes of the blood, nine dukes and peers of France, eight field-marshal, twenty-two nobles, eight counsellors of state, four masters of requests, eleven archbishops and bishops, thirty-seven judges of parliament, twelve deputies of the pays d'etat, the lieutenant civil, and twenty-five magistrates of different towns; in all, one hundred and forty-four. See Macfarlane's history of George III. vol. iii. p. 345.

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in remedying these complicated evils. He had, he said, re-established public credit upon a sound basis, had undertaken great and expensive works of the highest national importance; but notwithstanding all those favourable appearances of prosperity, there was an evil every year increasing in magnitude, this was the great annual deficiency of the public revenue, and its inadequacy to the national expence; to eradicate this evil was beyond the reach of ministers; additional taxes would oppress the people, whom the king wished of all things to relieve; anticipation on the revenue of subsequent years had already been practised to a ruinous extent; and the reduction of expence had been carried as far as was possible without weakening the state and government. In the reform of abuses, the king and his minister chiefly trusted to find a remedy for the evil. One of the most intolerable grievances which then prevailed, was the immunity of the most opulent classes from taxation; Calonne therefore proposed to equalise public burdens by rendering the taxes general; to accomplish this purpose, the nobility, clergy, and magistracies should be no longer exempted, but contribute their share to the exigencies of the state; the officers under the crown were to be assessed; and there should be a general impost on land, without excepting the possessions of any order or individual. Such a project, in whatsoever motives it originated, was certainly just in its principle, and efficient in its object, as a scheme of finance: as a measure of policy it was wise and equitable, since it proposed to restore to the commons so great a part of their usurped rights: but the minister did not

He proposes
an equalisation of public burdens.

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He incenses
the privi-
leged orders.

Outcry
against the
minister,

shew much judgment and prudence in the means which he chose for carrying his plan into execution. It was very improbable that the aristocratical corporations, to influence whom he had called the council of notables, would willingly recede from such lucrative immunities ; indeed, the notables themselves consisted of members of the privileged orders, and might as a body be presumed unfavourable to a project tending so much to diminish their corporate advantages. They actually proved very inimical to the plan, which they represented as merely a new expedient for getting immense sums of money into the hands of government, to supply its extravagance and corruption ; they refused to concur in the territorial impost, unless they were suffered to investigate the past expences and accounts, and future estimates, as thereby only they could know how far public money had been, or was likely to be, applied for the national good. The privileged orders raised a general outcry against the man who had proposed to abolish their immunities : they even persuaded the other classes, that the sole object of the minister was rapacity, for the purposes of embezzlement and speculation ; that, so far from intending to lighten their burdens by his new system of impost, he designed to load them with fresh taxes, and thus the aristocrates excited the hatred of the people against the minister, whose plan, if adopted and fairly executed, would have rendered to the people themselves so essential a service. Moreover, the queen was a great enemy to the minister, because he attacked one of her favourites. The mild and compliant

pliant Louis readily imbibed the prevailing sentiment, and withdrew his confidence and regard from a man whom he saw distrusted and hated by so many others. Calonne, fearing a judicial prosecution while the minds of all ranks were so biassed against him, retired into England *. Meanwhile monsieur de Brienne †, archbishop of Thou-louse, a leading member of the notables, was appointed prime minister, and without attempting the radical reform which the exigency required, he proposed and executed various partial improvements in the collection of taxes, and the management of the public money. It was manifest that a change so confined in principle and operation could not extricate the country from its present evils. By the new minister the assembly of notables was dissolved ‡, and he thought himself obliged to have recourse to the usual mode of raising money by edicts. Among the measures was a double poll-tax, and a heavy stamp-duty. The parliament of Paris remonstrated against the first subsidy, in terms very unlike the former language of their assemblies, even when they opposed the will of the king. Before they should concur in raising money, they required to be informed of the real state of the finances, and the purposes to which the new imposts were to be applied; and they particularly ob-

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Disgraced:
he retires
into banish-
ment.

Brienne
minister.

Trifling
and ineffi-
cient re-
form.

Contests
with the
parliament
of Paris.

* This minister has been charged with having amassed immense riches by plundering the public. He certainly lived in London, for several years, in magnificent splendor; but what his funds were, or how acquired, was never ascertained.

† Bouillé on the French Revolution, p. 50.

‡ In the opinion of Bouillé, very unwisely, p. 51.

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1789.
Attempts of
the crown
to overawe
the refrac-
tory, un-
successful.

Remon-
strance of
the par-
liament of
Paris.

jected to the stamp-duty; their requisition not having been admitted, they refused to enregister the edict. The king finding them inflexible to persuasion, held a bed of justice, to compel them to registration. This procedure, hateful in the reign of Louis XV. was infinitely more odious at present, when the spirit of liberty was so much stronger and more generally diffused. The edict having been forcibly registered, the parliament PROTESTED, that not having been obtained by their approbation and consent, IT SHOULD NOT BE VALID; and that whoever attempted to put it in execution should be doomed to the gallies as a traitor. This resolute opposition was imitated by all the other parliaments. Matters now appeared to draw to a crisis; the alternative of the crown seemed to be, either to proceed to coërcion, or to relinquish for ever the long-usurped power of raising money by its own authority. On the other hand, the judicative bodies were determined to shew that they would not, without resistance, any longer permit an arbitrary invasion of property, however supported by precedent. On the 24th of July the parliament of Paris published a remonstrance*, highly celebrated for a forcible reasoning, a bold and animated eloquence, which clearly demonstrated and strongly impressed awful truths. After a happy peace that had lasted five years, they, from the revenue before possessed by the crown, had trusted that no fresh imposts would have been proposed; great, then was their surprise at the requisition of an additional tax so extensive, and

* See remonstrance, State Papers, July 24th 1787.

generally

generally odious. Ministers had never approached the throne with a voice of truth, but had disguised from the king the actual state of his dominions, and the sentiments of his subjects. The council of the notables had been the occasion of discovering to the public the dreadful situation of affairs, and the progressive steps of error, corruption, and vice, by which courtiers had reduced France to such a condition. Taxes were the contributions of citizens for their own private security and the public safety; if they exceeded those purposes, they were inconsistent with justice and the good of the people, the sole objects of legitimate government. Neither parliaments, nor any other authority but the whole nation assembled, could sanction a new impost. The nation only, being convened and instructed in the true state of the finances, could extirpate the abuses that actually existed, and offer resources to obviate such evils in future. If this remonstrance be considered in relation to the rights of a free people, and to the actual abuses under the French government; it was firm, yet perfectly temperate and respectful. Addressed, however, to a monarch who had inherited arbitrary power, it appeared a presumptuous encroachment. It was extremely natural for Louis to think himself rightfully entitled to the sway of his ancestors; to overlook the injustice in which that dominion was founded, and the great change of popular sentiment from the time even of his last predecessor. Like Charles I. he presumed a divine right to what his ancestors and he had possessed only by human sufferance; and, like Charles I. he did not discern that the opinions and

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sentiments which had permitted thralldom, no longer existed among his subjects. Louis, however, had a much more formidable force than Charles, in which he conceived he might repose secure confidence. He therefore determined on coercion; collected great bodies of troops round the metropolis; and sent parties of soldiers to the house of every individual member of the parliament of Paris, to carry him in banishment to Troyes, about seventy miles from the capital, and not to suffer him to write or speak to any person of his own family before his departure. These orders were executed at the same instant, on the 18th of August, and by force the judicial body was prevented from proceeding in its official business. In the following month the president was dispatched by the exiles to Versailles, to represent to his majesty the pernicious effects of the compulsory measures which he was then pursuing. After several audiences, instead of adhering to the hereditary maxims of arbitrary power, the king yielded to the dictates of his individual benignity and patriotism; he consented to abandon the obnoxious attacks, and to suffer parliament to resume its functions. Meanwhile the flame of liberty was bursting forth in various parts of the kingdom *. Other parliaments not only emulated, but surpassed the generous boldness of Paris, and with the right of property asserted the claims of personal security. The parliament of Grenoble declared *lettres de cachet*, or arbitrary imprisonment, to be totally unconstitutional; and pronounced a decree,

* Annual Register, 1787, chap. vii. passim.

rendering it capital for any person, under ANY authority, to attempt such an act within that province. In all the populous towns, where there was the most ready and extensive interchange of opinion and sentiment; the conduct of government, once so sacred in France, was openly discussed, and most severely reprobated, both in discourse and publications *. The king, in November, appeared to have changed his disposition and intentions: meeting the parliament of Paris, he said he had come to hear their opinions; but before they delivered them; to signify his own †. They ought to confine themselves to the functions entrusted by the king to their predecessors: the expediency of calling public assemblies was a measure of which he was the sole judge. He was about to issue an edict, creating for five successive years a loan that would require no new impost. Permission being given for every member to speak without restraint, a warm debate on the registration of the edict ensued in the presence of the king; but at last his majesty, suddenly rising, commanded the decree to be registered without delay. The duke of Orleans, first prince of the blood after the king's brothers, warmly opposed this order, as a direct infringement of parliamentary right; and protested against all the acts of the day, as thereby rendered void. His majesty, astonished at a proceeding so new to an absolute prince, repeated his order, and quitted the assembly. The next day he banished the duke and two of his most

Banishment
of the active
opposition-
ists.

* Bertrand de Moleville, introduction.

† State Papers, Nov. 19, 1787.

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Bold tone
of parlia-
ment, and
forcible ad-
drefs.

active supporters. The parliament, far from tamely submitting to this act of power, published a very strong address, which justified the exiled members, avowed the highest approbation of their conduct, and represented the dangerous consequences of such a restriction on the necessary freedom of speech. The king answered, that he had strong reasons for the banishment of those members; with this assurance parliament ought to rest satisfied; the more goodness he was disposed to shew to his parliaments, the more firmly he would approve himself if he saw his goodness abused. Parliament replied in the bold tone of men determined to assert their freedom : “ your parliament does not *solicit* favour, it DEMANDS justice. No man ought to be condemned without a fair trial : arbitrary banishments, arrests, or imprisonments, constitute no part of the legal prerogative of the French crown. It is in the name of those laws which preserve the empire, in the name of that liberty of which we are the respectful interpreters and lawful mediators, in the name of your authority, of which we are the first and most confidential ministers, that we dare demand either the trial or the release of the duke of Orleans and the exiled magistrates.” This attack on a prerogative so long exercised by the court, and essential to the maintenance of arbitrary monarchy, was resisted by the king ; and he told them, that what they demanded of his justice depended on his will. This principle that would subject the freedom and happiness of millions to the will of an individual, though the foundation of French absolute monarchy, the enlightened parliament totally condemned ; they refused

fufed to purchafe juftice by confeffion; declared parliament would never ceafe to demand the impeachment or liberty of the perfons in queftion, and would employ the fame zeal and perfeverance to enfore to every Frenchman the perfonal fecurity promifed by the laws, and due by the principles of the conftitution. This patriotic affembly fupported the claim in queftion, and urged new assertions, not for their own body alone, but for the whole nation. They publifhed a remonftrance *, declaring that no taxes could be granted but by the confent of the people; they extended the fame doctrine to the whole body of legislative power, infifting that no man ought to be imprifoned, difpoffeffed of his property or liberty, outlawed or banifhed, or in any way hurt or injured, unlefs through his own act, his representatives, or the law of the land†. The parliament ‡ of Paris vindicated thofe fundamental rights, which no time, nor precedent, nor ftatute, nor pofitive inftitution can abolifh, which men always may reclaim when they will. They endeavoured from
 history

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The parliament of Paris asserts the rights of a free people.

* State Papers, Nov. 23d, 1787.

† See this doctrine ftated by Hume in his remarks on the great charter of England, Hift. vol. ii. p. 88.

‡ The provincial parliaments of France were originally courts of juftice, poffeffing no fhare in the legiflation, either as an order or as representatives of the people. From the time of cardinal Richelieu, the legiflative as well as the executive authority was vefted entirely in the crown. The practice of employing the parliaments to enregister the king's edicts, was never intended to convey any authority or force through thefe bodies; they were confidered merely as notaries, to record and authenticate their exiftence, and thereby as well to promulgate them, as to prevent any

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history and authority to prove this popular consent to have been the foundation of laws in former times, before the subversion of the constitution under the house of Bourbon. The precedents which they quoted did not apply to the present situation, and indeed obscured instead of illustrating their claims. But as neither the justice or expediency of the doctrine rested upon former usage or authority, the irrelevancy of their citations affected neither the truth of their positions, nor the wisdom of their conduct.

Spirit of
boundless
innovation.

The spirit of liberty and reform, operating on the ingenious and volatile character of Frenchmen, and tinged by the peculiar doctrines of late political philosophers, produced a disposition to innovation. Even at this period many reformers assumed a position, that every existing establishment was bad, and therefore that melioration consisted in a total change. The court imputed to parliaments the prevailing spirit, which these bodies rather expressed than incited; and, confounding the organs with the

any doubts being entertained by the public of their reality. The parliament, however, as their popularity and power increased, and times and circumstances proved favourable to the design, assumed a right of judging whether these edicts were injurious to the public. If they determined them to be hurtful, they by a legal fiction pretended that being contrary to the welfare of the people, and contrary to the king's wisdom, justice, or clemency, they did not believe them to be the king's real acts, but considered them as an imposition practised by his ministers; and on this ground they presented memorials or remonstrances to the king, placing in the strongest colours they could all the evil consequences which they presumed would attend their being passed into laws. See Annual Register, 1789.
cause

cause, formed a project for annulling the authority which was recently assumed by these bodies. Professing to gratify the popular passion for reform, ministers proposed a general amendment in the codes both of civil and criminal justice. For this purpose, a tribunal was to be instituted, endowed with such powers, as would carry back the parliaments to the original principles of their institution, and reduce them to the condition of mere courts of justice*. The members of this body were all to be chosen by the king†: their number, and every circumstance relative to their meeting, was to depend on the royal will. Profound secrecy was observed in conducting this project: the edicts were privately printed at the royal press, and intended to be presented, on the same day to all the parliaments in France, and the registration was to be enforced by soldiers. The scheme, however, being discovered before it was ripe for execution, by M. d'Épreshmenil, was by him communicated to the parliament of Paris, of which he was a member. This body, meeting on the 3d of May 1788, issued a declaration, stating a report of a conspiracy, by the court, against the authority of parliaments, the interests and liberties of the nation. Detailing the alleged rights of parliaments, and the purposes both of their general be-

* Bouillé, 54.

† They were to have consisted of princes of the blood; of peers of the realm; of great officers of state; of marshals of France; of governors of provinces; of knights of different orders; of members of council; and of a deputation of one member from each parliament of the kingdom, and two from the chamber of accounts and supply. Annual Register, 1789, c. i.

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stowal and recent exercise, they declared their resolution of surrendering their privileges, not to ministers, or any new courts established by their influence, but to the king himself, and the states general. Though Louis had, as an act of grace, liberated Orleans and the magistrates, he still determined to support the principle of arbitrary imprisonment. Agreeably to this resolution, he ordered M. D'Epresmenil, and M. De Monsambert, two of the most active members of the parliament, to be arrested in their houses. Though these patriots evaded immediate caption, by concealing themselves from the foldiers, they disdained to abstain from their duty in parliament. That body, informed of the attempt, sent a deputation to remonstrate with the king; but the delegates were not admitted. A regiment of guards surrounded the court of parliament; its commander entering the assembly, demanded the two magistrates whom the king had ordered to be arrested: a profound silence for some time ensued; at last, the president rising, with the acclamations of the whole body, replied, every member here, is a D'Epresmenil and a Monsambert*. These magistrates, however, surrendered themselves, and were led off to prison amidst the loud execrations of the people. The king, on the 8th of May, held a bed of justice to introduce the intended reforms: he inveighed against the undutiful behaviour of parliament, and declared his determination to suppress such excesses, in a few

* Annual Register, 1789, chap. i. Mackintosh's *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*.

of the magistrates ; yet in general he preferred prevention to penal animadversion ; he then announced the heads of the new constitution which his chancellor fully detailed *. Parliament the following day entered against these proceedings a protest, repeating the substance of their former remonstrances, and declaring individually and aggregately that they would accept of no employment under the projected establishment. This protestation was seconded by a great body of the members ; and so generally was the new spirit now disseminated, that even many of the clergy declared concurrence in their sentiments and resolution. Thus encouraged, parliament published a still stronger memorial than any which they had before issued ; preremptorily declaring their inflexible determination to persevere in their past measures. Through all the kingdom, public bodies, spontaneous associations, and private individuals, appeared agitated by the same spirit. The court, on the other hand, proceeded to coercive measures ; the governor of Paris entering the parliament-house, took possession of all the papers and archives ; having locked the doors, and stamped them with the king's seal, he carried away the keys. All the other parliaments in the kingdom were suspended from their functions, and forbidden under the severest penalties to hold any meetings. In this crisis, the question now evidently lay between the establishment of liberty, or of complete despotism *. Brienne was by no means capable of conducting affairs in so difficult a situa-

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Arbitrary
suspension of
the parlia-
ments.

National
ferment.

* State Papers, May 8th.

† Bouillé, passim.

tion ;

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Unfitness of
Brienne for
his office.

tion ; he possessed neither the sagacity which could have discovered the force of a general spirit diffused through a people of such boldness and energy, nor the wisdom which, to a certain extent, would have gratified the national desire, in order to prevent the national violence ; and moderated the regal power to preserve its essential and useful prerogative. He was no less deficient in that boldness of design, and vigour of execution, which only could have overborne the determination of the people, and crushed their rights. The ready and willing tool of arbitrary power in its usual and established exercise, he possessed neither invention nor courage to be its counsellor or champion in untried dangers. The conduct of government was a motley mixture of outrage and irresolution, violence and feebleness : for a short time the court persisted in coercive efforts, both in Paris and other provinces ; and in Dauphiny, Languedoc and Britany, the parliaments were exiled, but the rage of the people broke out in riots, which produced disorder and bloodshed. In some instances it appeared, that the soldiers being commanded to quell the disturbances, manifested an extreme unwillingness to act against their countrymen. The king was at this time in the greatest pecuniary distress, which he saw the people would not voluntarily relieve : nothing, he perceived, short of military execution would enforce the obnoxious edicts. Destitute of money, he lost a great part of the influence which through donative he had possessed ; many of the nobility, from the extravagance of their ancestors, their own, or both, were mere dependents on the bounty of the crown ;

Distressed
situation of
the king.

crown ; and in the poverty of the king they saw themselves precluded from the usual resource of titled insignificance and beggary ; accustomed to luxury and splendor, and the eleemosynary fountain of their prodigality and ostentation no longer flowing, they from a special cause became infected with the general discontent ; poor lords, who had subsisted by the royal dole, forsook the king when he had no dole to bestow *. The household of the monarch, extremely magnificent and expensive, had supported vast numbers of officers and attendants ; in the king's distresses four hundred of these were necessarily dismissed ; many of them, no longer maintained in idleness and pomp, turned against the hand which had given them food while it had food to give, and from the most despicable and unworthy motives added to the number of those who opposed the king's government from generous and patriotic principles. The discontents rising from political causes were enhanced by a physical calamity ; a dreadful hurricane of wind, rain, hail, thunder and lightening, on the 13th of July, assailing the land, destroyed the fruits and corn. Want and misery were soon felt through the kingdom ; and the capital itself was apprehensive of a famine. The dearness of provisions induced or compelled many families to dismiss their servants, and thus increased the number of the idle, distressed, and dissatisfied. To aggravate the danger which menaced the court from so many concurring causes, the wild theories of sophistical projectors, equally inimical to religion as to regular government, to

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* Annual Register, 1789.

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beneficial liberty as to absolute monarchy, were fast gaining ground. In the latter end of 1788, the opponents of the king consisted of two great classes :—first, the champions of rational liberty, determined not only to prevent future encroachments, but to correct past usurpations ; to change the government from an absolute to a limited monarchy ; to render its object the general happiness, instead of the pleasure of individuals, its rule the national voice, instead of the monarch's will. The other class consisted of those who, not contented with an alteration of measures, sought an utter subversion of the establishment, and promoted doctrines and schemes, which would destroy all government : between these two extremes there were various gradations, from the supporters of limited monarchy to the levellers of all ranks and orders. The principal actors were at this time chiefly of the former division, or at least more nearly allied to it than to the latter ; but subordinate agents, especially many of the literary men employed as efficacious instruments by the leaders, were closely connected with the votaries of boundless revolution. Many of the writers, in combatting absolute power to assist parliaments and vindicate the rights of the people, attacked all existing forms and establishments, and loosened the great cements of society*.

The minister seeing his sovereign in such calamitous circumstances, was more mindful of his own safety, than gratitude to his master ; he resigned his office, and sought refuge in Italy. Louis finding his own distresses, and those of his kingdom,

* Bertrand de Moleville on the French Revolution, v. i. c. i.

multiplying, and that the arbitrary measures which were suggested by his ministers were producing effects so different from their predictions, and his wishes, resolved to adopt a new plan, more consistent with his own benignant character. To gratify the nation, and procure a counsellor likely to relieve the country and himself, he determined to recal the celebrated Mr. Neckar. From this gentleman, so universally popular, and, indeed, the idol of their adoration, the warm fancies of Frenchmen expected impossibilities. They seemed to have conceived that he possessed a kind of magical power, which could pay off an immense public debt without money, and supply twenty-five millions of people with corn and bread. But Neckar by no means possessed those extraordinary talents which were once imputed to him by the grateful subjects of Louis, and by that monarch himself. Strict morals and integrity even his adversaries * ascribed to this celebrated economist; but the impartial philosopher † readily discovered that he was a mere man of detail; a skilful and upright steward, but not a profound statesman. "Neckar (says Bouillé) viewed France with the eyes of a citizen of Geneva." Native of a republic, he was warmly attached to the rights and interests of the people; of plebeian extraction, he too little regarded the distinctions of rank and of birth, and estimated them by the abstract principles of equality, instead of the actual institutions of an established government in a great and powerful nation: his sentiments and habits of thinking were inimical to the privileged orders.

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He resolves
to recal
Mr. Neckar,

* Bouillé, page 70.

† Adam Smith.

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Neckar was, individually, a man of immense riches; during a considerable part of his life, he had been chiefly conversant with monied capitalists, and naturally attributed more than its due share of importance to the distinction of wealth: hence, in every regulation which he should desire to frame, farmers of the revenue, contractors, bankers, and merchants, were likely to be more considered than the clergy or nobility: and from these various causes Neckar was chiefly attached to the third estate. With such notions and predilections he came to the administration of France, at a season which required a statesman and lawgiver that could survey the whole circumstances and interests of the empire without leaning either to clergy or laity, nobility or plebeians, to riches or to birth; and would provide impartially and effectually for the welfare of the whole.

On Mr. Neckar's appointment, the chief persons of Brienne's party were dismissed from office. The parliament of Paris was restored to its functions, met in the middle of September, and caused all the king's late decrees, which they represented as unconstitutional, to be publicly burnt. Mr. Neckar found the finances in so disordered a condition, that he advised a convocation of the States General as the only effectual measure for relief. He proposed, however, as a preliminary, to summon a new convocation of notables, who should deliver their opinion concerning the composition of the States General, the qualifications of the electors, and of the elected; the mode of election, the proportion of delegates to the wealth and populousness of the several

who coun-
sels the con-
vocation of
the States
General.

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ral districts ; also, the amount and relation of members to be sent by the different orders, and the instructions which they were to receive from their constituents ; and the 1st of May 1789, was the day appointed for the meeting of the States General.

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Two great questions existed between the three orders, the nobles, the clergy, and the commons ; first, whether all the deputies should meet in one assembly, wherein the concentrated power of the States General should reside, or whether they should be divided as they had been at the last meeting in 1614, into three chambers, through which a resolution must be carried (at least two of them) before it became the acknowledged act of the States *. Secondly, whether the number of deputies from each of the orders should be three hundred, as in 1614, or the clergy and nobles should retain their former numbers, and the commons send six hundred, so as to equal the amount of the other two estates : this was called the double representation of the people. These two questions agitated the public with great violence : if they voted by orders, a double representation would be of no effect, as the two estates could out-vote the three ; therefore, the double representation was proposed on the supposition that they were to vote by numbers. The arguments for three assemblies were founded on ancient usage ; for one, upon justice and expediency. By the supporters of the

Question concerning the consolidation of the orders,

* Voting *by heads* was the term applied to the first of these alternatives, and voting *by orders* to the second.

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and the
double re-
presentation

left it was contended, that unless there was but one assembly the power of the commons would really be nugatory. The clergy and nobles would coalesce together to defend their immunities against the commons, who, in their own, maintained the general interests of the people. If their numbers were not equal to those of the other two orders, they could effect no purpose of important improvement. The aristocratical estates prevailing among the notables, that council voted for separate chambers. In their opinion concurred the Parliament of Paris, which, though desirous of repressing the power of the crown, was inimical to the exaltation of the commons. Mr. Neckar inclined to the third estate, but at the same time professed a desire to preserve the necessary and useful prerogatives of the crown; but the means were not wisely adapted to the end. Neckar reasoned like an accountant rather than a statesman, and treated a question for constituting the legislation of a mighty nation, as if he had been summing up the items of a day-book in order to make an entry into a ledger: he thought that by equalizing the *numbers* of the commons and the two privileged orders, the one would balance the other; the States General, like the parliament of England, would consist of two great branches of law-givers, which, together with the king, might produce mutual support and reciprocal controul, therefore he promoted the double representation. But though there would be thus an *arithmetical* equality between the two first orders and the third, perfectly satisfactory to an auditor of accounts, there was by no means that *POLITICAL* equality

equality which would have satisfied a wise law-giver, who proposed to establish an effectual balance in a constitution. If Neckar had discerned the actual state ~~and~~ party, he would have found that the partizans of the privileged orders among the commons were very few, that the partizans of the commons among the privileged orders were very many *, and therefore, that if they were equal in number, the commons would engross the power which he proposed to be separated. Intending that the aristocracy and democracy should be a mutual equipoise, Mr. Neckar; to whose opinion the king implicitly resigned himself, in no small degree contributed to the destruction of the one and predominancy of the other. The minister entirely neglected the question concerning the consolidation of the orders; an omission which prevented a corrective of the power which the commons were to obtain by the double representation. The parliament of Paris found they had lost their popularity by taking the side of the other privileged orders, and that they might regain the favour of the commons, published a decree which vindicated as the rights of a Frenchman, all the leading objects that have been attained, or indeed sought, by the best and most admired constitutions. The rights claimed, nearly the same as those secured to Englishmen, were such as must have contented all who understood both the extent and bounds of useful liberty. The chief heads of the decree were, that no assembly could be considered as national, unless it ascertained the following points in favour of the people: the periodical returns of the States

* See Annual Register 1789.

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General ; no subsidy to be allowed, unless granted by the States ; no law to be executed by the courts of justice, unless ratified by the States ; the suppression of all taxes which marked the exemption of certain orders ; equalization of imposts ; the responsibility of ministers ; the right of the States General to bring accusations before the courts of justice for crimes ; the abolition of arbitrary imprisonment, by bringing before the proper judges every man who was detained ; and confirming the lawful freedom of the press. These claims were far from answering the ideas of liberty now spread through France. The decree was regarded with indifference, and the parliament henceforward dwindled into insignificance. The year 1789 began with very great dissensions between the orders. The nobility and clergy, which, in 1787, had refused to part with their immunities, now expressed their willingness to take an equal share of the public burdens. The commons, far from being satisfied with this submission, proposed to overthrow all privileges whatsoever ; to reject every claim founded on ancient usage, or on compact ; to make general equality the standard of private or public right. The writers of the time employed their separate and joint ingenuity in attacking the rank and titles of the nobles, and the tenure by which many of them held their estates ; and French liberty, in the beginning of 1789, was mingled with principles subversive of rank and of property. Until the meeting of the States, the question concerning the amalgamation of the orders agitated the nobles and commons, while the clergy appeared undecided, and ready to join the party which should prevail. It had been customary in France, in former times, when

The commons of France already desire a licence too great for useful liberty.

when the States General met, for the orders in each district to deliver instructions to their respective delegates. This practice being now revived, the directions given to the deputies of the nobles, and to the deputies of the commons, by their respective constituents, very fully manifested the diversity of the spirit which actuated the three bodies. The instructions of the nobility enjoined their representatives to urge a reform of the constitution; to strengthen the securities for property, liberty, and life; and to surrender their pecuniary exemptions, but not resign their feudal rights, nor to consent to a consolidation of the orders. The commons, in their mandates to their commissioners, instructed them to insist on the abolition of all distinctions, the abandonment of feudal rights, and the resolution of the different states into one mass. The injunctions of the nobility tended, if followed, to establish a moderate and limited government, securing civil rights to all classes of subjects, but preserving a distinction of orders and a subordination of ranks. The injunctions of the commons, previous to their first assembly, tended to overturn the other states under the weight of a democracy*.

On the 1st of May 1789, after a cessation of 175 years, the States General of France met for the first time. The parties which had prevailed through-

Meeting of
the states.

* Mr. Lally Tolendal, in exhibiting the different views of the parties of this time, observes, the commons wished to conquer, the nobles wished to preserve what they already possessed; the clergy waited to see which side would be victorious, in order to join the conquerors.

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out the kingdom, appeared in the States General, and ranged themselves into three great divisions. The first was the aristocratic party, determined to support the ancient form and mode of procedure, by a separation of the States into three chambers. This class was considerable from the rank, talents, and situation of its members. The second division was that of the moderate party; its members were, on the one hand, averse to assemblies of three separate orders, as tending to throw the legislative power too much into the hands of the privileged states, and, instead of an unlimited monarchy, to establish an uncontrouled aristocracy; on the other, they were inimical to the confusion of the orders, as tending, instead of reforming, to subvert the government. These were desirous of forming the nobles and clergy into one house, upon a principle of reciprocal controul, analogous to the British constitution. The third division was the great and formidable democratic party, seeking and tending to overbear all ranks and distinctions. In this class were to be numbered some of the most conspicuous men of the other orders. The extraordinary abilities of Mirabeau were employed against that estate to which he himself belonged. The first prince of the blood was active in promoting factions tending to subvert the monarchy from which he derived his elevated rank and immense possessions *. Against the

* The yearly income of the Duke of Orleans was estimated at half a million sterling. A considerable part of this revenue was employed in acquiring popularity, and forming, from the idle and profligate rabble through the provinces, but especially in

the clergy appeared the Bishop of Autun, carrying with him a great body of his brethren, and prepared to join the most violent commons in their democratic excesses. The Abbe Sieyes, an eminent disciple of the new philosophy, penetrating, crafty, and versatile, brought all his ability and address to support the faction which his discernment easily perceived about to be paramount. The literary men, a great and powerful class in circumstances that so much depended on public opinion, ranged themselves under the standard of the commons, pursuing measures so inimical to that tranquillity and prosperity which best nourish the pursuits of literature. The monied capitalists, proud of their wealth, and envious of the rank which their opulence could not attain, were foremost in instigating measures tending to the destruction of that property which only could prevent them from insignificance. Besides these classes, the third division included numbers of profligate spend-thrifts, abounding in France, as in all luxurious countries, who wished for a change by which they hoped to be better, and knew they could not be worse.

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The States being met, his majesty, in a speech from the throne, mentioned his reasons for convoking the assembly; he noticed the restless spirit of innovation, and the general discon-

Speech of
the king.

in the city of Paris, a numerous body of retainers, ready to undertake any service, however desperate, at his instance. If his views, as has been often asserted, were directed to the highest pinnacle of ambition, by a fatality which often accompanies wickedness, the measures, which he pursued for the destruction of another, destroyed himself.

tent

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Of Neckar.

tent which prevailed among his people. A great object of the states, he trusted, would be to remove those evils ; and they would manifest in their proceedings that loyalty and attachment to the monarchy from which France derived such glory and benefit. The chancellor spoke of the advantages which accompanied a limited government, equally distant from despotism and anarchy. Mr. Neckar then rising, excited in the audience the highest expectation. From him all parties trusted for the most full and accurate information concerning every important department of public affairs ; strong practical reasoning, which would demonstrate what was wise and right to be done at such a crisis ; with manly eloquence to inculcate the necessity of correspondent conduct ; but all were totally disappointed : his speech was loose and declamatory, abounding in general maxims of morality and politics, which were obviously true, but in no way illustrated the momentous subjects of deliberation ; and sentimental effusions, that asserted the wishes of the speaker for the happiness of France, without explaining any means for its attainment. On the great subject of consolidation he said nothing decisive, he merely expressed a desire that the matter might be accommodated. Appointed by his sovereign to address the national representatives, who were assembled to deliberate on great public difficulties, he neither stated facts, nor proposed means leading to extrication ; his harangue was totally inadequate to the office which he was chosen to discharge. The ministry were no less feeble and indecisive in their conduct than their language. The king at this time possessed

all the legal authority of the kingdom ; and though the states were met, they were not yet constituted, as the writs of election had not been examined. He, by his established authority might have instituted concerning their sessions, any regulations which should be conformable to ancient precedent and usage ; and to have refused compliance with his directions would have been rebellion. Notwithstanding his possession of this power, his ministers most impolitically neglected the exercise of it to prevent the confusion of the orders, and thereby suffered the states to become a democratical assembly. The verification of their powers* afforded the first occasion to the commons of insisting that they should meet in one chamber. Encouraged by their own strength, and the backwardness of the ministers, they very boldly asserted, that unless the writs were verified in their presence, they could not admit their holders to a seat in the assembly, and that both nobles and clergy would be illegal meetings. The clergy wavered ; many of the nobility were firm in maintaining the rights of a separate verification, but there were great dissensions in that body. The commons, on the other hand,

Disunion
and indecision
of the
nobles and
clergy.

* Each member was obliged, before the commencement of public business, to present his writ of election upon the table of the chamber to which he belonged. Commissaries were then appointed by each order to examine the authenticity of all the writs immediately belonging to itself ; and until this business was finished, which usually took up several days, the States General were destitute of all legal authority whatsoever. The sanction of these commissaries to the authenticity of the writs, afforded what was called the *verification of powers*.

were

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The commons declare
themselves a
national
assembly.

were united. Mr. Neckar proposed conciliatory measures, which, from their indecisiveness, satisfied neither party. The nobles remaining inflexible, the commons, by a still bolder stretch of their power and influence, declared that they would constitute themselves into an active assembly, and proceed to legislative business. Many of the clergy, seeing the commons prevalent, flocked to their hall, and were most joyfully received. The commons executed the bold design which they had formed, and constituted themselves into a meeting which they denominated the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. This body so formed by its own act, rapidly advanced in the assumption of power. On the 17th of June they published a decree, intimating that they possessed the sovereign authority, and exercised the same by a very popular act, declaring all existing taxes to be illegal*. The king was alarmed at proceedings which changed the constitution, and tended speedily to draw the supreme authority into the democratic vortex; and began to be dissatisfied with his ministers, to whose irresolution and inaction, he now imputed the progress of ambitious violence. The princes and other votaries of the old government, exhorted him to vigorous measures†; they advised him to hold a royal session in the hall of the States General, which by assembling would suspend the meeting of that body. The king agreed to follow the advice, and on the 20th of June he issued a proclamation appointing the

* Bertrand, vol. I. 69.

† Bertrand, chap. II.

22d for that purpose. The majority of the clergy having now agreed to join the commons, the members of the third estate repaired to the hall. The king having appointed the same day for the royal session, the guards were ordered to keep that apartment clear until the arrival of his majesty. As the members of the assembly came to the door, they were refused admittance by the soldiers ; the commons, from so violent an act, apprehending an immediate dissolution, retired to an old tennis-court, where they bound themselves by a solemn oath never to part until the constitution was completed. The majority of the clergy now joined the commons, and met them in St. Louis's church, on the 23d. The royal session being opened, his majesty proposed the outlines of a new constitution : he engaged to establish no fresh tax, nor to prolong an old impost beyond the term assigned by the laws, without the consent of the representatives of the nation ; he renounced the right of borrowing money, unless with the approbation of the states ; there should be an end of pecuniary exemptions ; and *lettres de cachet* should cease, with some modifications. He condemned the late decree of the commons, which assumed by their own sole act, the whole legislative power of the kingdom ; and concluded that none of the laws established in the present States General could ever be altered, but by the free consent of future States General, and that they should be considered as equally sacred with all other national properties. On the other hand, he declared that all tithes and feudal rents should

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should be accounted property, and therefore sacred; and that the states should be assembled in three chambers instead of one. The manner of the address by no means suited the conciliatory professions, nor indeed the substance of the proposition. It frequently introduced the king's will as the foundation of grants which in a government intended to be free were RIGHTS, not *favours*. In themselves, however, the propositions were such as a few years before, political sagacity could have not conceived that a king of France would offer to his subjects. His majesty commanded them to separate, and to meet the next day in the halls of their respective orders. Equitable as the plan was in itself, it required little penetration to perceive, that it would by no means meet the ideas of the commons; that the magisterial expressions would render it still more unpalatable, and were therefore extremely unwise. The commons listened in haughty silence, while the plan was reading; and as soon as the king departed, absolutely refused to break up their session. The king's attendants having reminded them of his majesty's order, the president answered, **THE NATION ASSEMBLED HAS NO ORDERS TO RECEIVE***. They passed a resolution declaring the adherence of the assembly to its former decree: and another pronouncing the persons of the deputies

* Mirabeau, who through some acts and some suspicions had nearly lost his popularity, had the fortune upon this occasion to recover it with increase, by the impetuosity with which he told the king's attendants, that nothing but the points of bayonets should force them out of their chamber.

sacred and inviolable. The populace at Versailles became violent in behalf of the commons. At Paris the ferment was still more outrageous †, and increased in proportion to the attempts of either the nobles or the court, to oppose or controul the pretensions of the third estate. The commons now found themselves so strong in the public support, that they affected to treat the king's system and declaration as too insignificant to merit consideration or answer. On the 24th of June, the Count de Clermont moved, that the nobles should unite with the commons, and was ably joined by Monsieur de Lally Tollendal; but the majority of nobles, would not bend to a proposal which the natural prepossession of birth, rank, and custom, taught them to deem humiliating. Many of that body, however, were either connected with the popular party, or convinced that inflexibility would answer no purpose; and therefore joined the assembly. The people became hourly more

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Popular
violence.

Firmness in
the nobles.

† No class of rioters was more active in the French capital than the (*poissardes*) fish-women; who, in addition to the violence of their sisters in our own metropolis, possessed all the Gallic vivacity. Far exceeding the Billingsgate fair, instead of confining themselves to volubility of invective, from time immemorial they had acted a distinguished part in Parisian mobs, and were noted for their ferocious actions. On so great an occasion they were not slow in displaying their zeal and their talents. The sex likewise afforded another class of auxiliaries, more insinuating, less savage in appearance, but not less effective. These were the *courtezans*, whose numbers were immense in that profligate city. One of the chief scenes of disorder and enormity was the garden of the Duke of Orleans, whither the mob daily resorted, where hired orators inflamed them to every act of atrocious violence.

violent

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violent against the majority of the nobles, whom they deemed refractory: outrage and bloodshed were expected. The members of this self-created assembly had far exceeded the instructions of their constituents; in assuming the legislative power, they were not the representatives of the people; they were a strong and numerous faction, that usurped the office of lawgivers by force; by force only could usurpation have been opposed. Concession never did nor can avert the encroachments of determined ambition. This was the language which the princes of the blood*, and all the firmest friends of the monarchy held; it was indeed not the language of choice, but necessity. From the attempt of the popular faction to seize the direction of the empire, the simple question with the votaries of monarchy was, shall we defend ourselves or be overwhelmed? There was no alternative. The king was uniformly impelled by humanity, and in the mildness of his disposition, seeking the good of his people, he deviated from that firmness by which only their welfare could have been effectually secured. To avert the dangers which he conceived to impend over the unyielding nobles, he entreated that order to give up their judgment and determination to the wishes of the governing faction. On the 27th of June he sent the following message to the nobles, by their president the Duke of Luxembourg: "From the fidelity and affection of the order of which you are president, I expect its union with the other two. I have reflected upon it, and am determined to make every sacri-

The king
exhorts
them to
yield.

* See Bertrand.

vice rather than that a single man should perish on my account. Tell the order of the nobility, therefore, that I entreat them to join the other two estates; and if this be not enough, I command them to do it as their king—it is my will. If there be one of its members who believes himself bound by his instructions, his oath, or his honour, to remain in the chamber, let me know: I will go and sit by him, and die with him if it be necessary!" A long and violent debate took place, in which the Duke of Luxemburgh read a letter from the Count d'Artois, intimating that the king's person might be exposed to immediate danger, if the popular fury was roused by their refusal. The question of union was at last carried in the affirmative, and the nobles repaired to the hall of the commons that evening. The proposed meeting of the orders became a popular convention; and, from this moment, the constitution of France may be considered as actually changed, although the commencement of the revolution be dated from a subsequent period. The popular leaders now saw that imperious demand would extort concession; and on this discovery they formed their judgment, and regulated their conduct.

The people, seeing the orders united, believed the happiness of France on the eve of completion. All parties agreed on the necessity of correcting the ancient government; the only difference appeared to be respecting the extent to which the reform should be carried, and the means that should be employed. It was hoped that the presence of the nobility and clergy, containing, besides rank, so

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At his majesty's instance they unite with the commons.

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much of talents and of learning, might restrain the intemperate heat of republicans, while the ardent zeal and bold freedom of the commons might inspire and invigorate the other states; and that thus they should establish liberty without licentiousness; but these expectations were entirely disappointed. The conduct of the court, having before exhibited such a mixture of rashness and timidity, violence and irresolution, consistent in weakness and fluctuation only, soon presented appearances that excited considerable alarm, but much greater suspicion. The states-general, since their consolidation, had been more moderate than at any other period of their session. They had already appointed a committee to prepare materials for the new constitution: Messieurs Lally Tollendal, and Mounier, two of the most able and temperate leaders, were of this committee; and entertained flattering hopes that the moderation would prove general. The demagogues very early endeavoured to cultivate a close connection between their votaries and the soldiers, and successfully instilled the popular doctrines into these troops. In seducing the army from obedience to their king, the democrats very liberally employed wine, gold, and women, of which last article they had an abundant supply by their alliance with the harlots of Paris. The soldiers now having their professional daringness and debauchery, without the professional restraints of subordination and military discipline, totally disregarded their officers; left their barracks without leave, repaired to the Palais Royal, joined and even headed the mob in their

The soldiers
are infected
with the
popular en-
thusiasm.

their most enormous excesses, while hand bills and ballads were composed and dispersed, to spread the flames. The soldiers vied with the populace in their democratic exclamations and other excesses: the most daring and refractory being committed to prison, the people flew in, crowds to the jail, forced the gates, liberated the captives, and demanded for them a free pardon. The national assembly endeavoured to accommodate the matter, by exhorting the Parisians to tranquillity, and the king to clemency. His majesty having no efficient force at hand was obliged to comply, and thus ended military discipline and civil government at Paris.

The disorderly state of the metropolis, and the unfitness of the guards for re-establishing tranquillity, were ostensible reasons for bringing a great armed force from the different provinces. In the beginning of July about thirty-five thousand men drew near Paris and Versailles. On the 10th of the month the national assembly presented very strong remonstrances to the king on the approach of the forces. He answered that he had no other motive for his conduct, than the necessity of establishing and maintaining good order in the capital. He was so far from intending to interrupt the proceedings of the assembly, that if the presence of the soldiery gave them umbrage, he was ready to transfer the states-general to Noyon, or Soissons, and repair himself to some place in its vicinity, where he could maintain a ready communication with the legislative body. The moderate members were willing to accede to this proposal; but the popular leaders

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Insubordination and
licentious-
acts.

The king
orders
troops to
approach
Paris.

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were aware of the strength which they derived from the capital, and would not leave its vicinity. They either reposed, or professed to repose, no confidence in the king's assurances, and gave out that a plot was formed by the court to crush the nascent liberties of Frenchmen. The king now appeared evidently to listen to the supporters of the old government, and withdrew his confidence from those counsellors who had been favorable to popular measures. The partizans of the ancient monarchy severely reprobated the conduct of Neckar, to whose republican sentiments and counsels they imputed the degraded state of royal authority: and strongly urged the king to discharge a servant who from either design or imprudence* had endangered the monarchy. Accordingly on the 11th of July Mr. Neckar was dismissed† from administration, and ordered to quit the kingdom, and with him the other members of the cabinet were also discharged from their employments. Mr. de Breteuil, a zealous friend of the old government, was appointed prime minister, and Marshal Broglio, who maintained

M. Neckar
dismissed.

* Bertrand, vol. 1, p. 191.

† Mr. Neckar kept his disgrace a profound secret, even from his wife, and received company that day at dinner, as usual. Those who dined with him did not perceive the least alteration in his countenance. After dinner his wife and daughter invited him to take a ride to the Val, a country house situated in the forest of *St. Germain*, belonging to Madame de Beauvais, an intimate friend of Mrs. Neckar's. He consented, and went into the carriage with his wife, but instead of going to the Val, he took the road to Brussels, in order to be the sooner out of the kingdom.

the

the same sentiments, commander in chief. On Sunday the 12th of July, these changes being reported at Paris, caused the greatest despair and fury, and riots prevailed in every quarter. The rashness of the prince de Lambese, who, endeavouring to disperse a riotous body of populace, wounded with his own hand one who was said to be only a spectator, not only increased the tumult, but hastened the general insurrection for which the people were so ripe. The mob, with clubs, spits, and such weapons as they could procure, rushed upon Lambese's troops, and put them to flight, not without killing some of the number*. The following night Paris was filled with a dread of slaughter from the army, and of general plunder

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* This transaction of Lambese's appears to have been without any orders from the ministers, or any concert with the other military commanders. Though there were several regiments of foot stationed close to Paris, none of them stirred to assist and protect Lambese's corps. The total inaction of the troops, both on the succeeding day and night, during all which time, critical as the season was, and notwithstanding the preparations they knew to be making in Paris, they never attempted to enter the city, seems to exculpate the court and ministers from the bloody designs imputed to them by the popular party. If such a scheme had been proposed, this would have been the season for its execution, when prevalent confusion and terror would have prevented any effectual plan of resistance. Weakness and folly, indeed, chiefly characterized the ministerial councils of the time. Knowing that in former periods the very appearance of troops had intimidated the Parisian populace, they without adverting to the total change of sentiments and circumstances, seem vainly to have expected the same effect at present.

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An army
of volun-
teers is im-
mediately
raised.
The nation-
al cock-
ade.

from the multitudes of miscreants with which that vast metropolis abounded; but prompt in expedient, they next day generally armed, formed themselves into one great body with the professed intention of securing internal order, and defending themselves against external enemies. They adopted a peculiar cockade for the purpose; and thirty thousand citizens totally unaccustomed to arms, were soon seen completely accoutred, and in a few hours assumed the appearance of order and discipline. The national volunteers came in a body to proffer to the people their service, which was most joyfully accepted. Directed by the popular leaders, and instructed by their military auxiliaries, the armed citizens prepared to defend the capital against the approaching troops. They threw up entrenchments, and formed barricadoes in different parts of the suburbs. A permanent council was appointed to sit night and day at the Hotel de Ville; and a communication was established between this body and the national assembly. In the course of this day, various robberies being committed, the multitude seizing some of the thieves in the fact, dragged them instantly to the Greve, the common place of execution, and hanged them by the ropes which were used to fasten the lanterns. Hence originated that most horrid practice of the French mob, making themselves judges and executioners in the same instant, without the smallest regard to law or justice, rank, age, or sex.

They at-
tack the
royal maga-
zines to
procure
arms.

The next day was the celebrated 14th of July. The new army, early in the morning, attacked the Hotel des Invalids, and taking it by surprize, seized

seized a large magazine of arms and ammunition ; thence they proceeded to the *Garde Meuble*, or ancient armoury, forced it open, and distributing the contents among their own body, completed their means for defensive and offensive operations. They now conceived a much bolder design, which was to seize the Bastile ; but aware that this fortress was very strong, and amply supplied with provisions for standing a siege, they bethought themselves of attempting stratagem ; they accordingly negotiated with the marquis de Launay, and coming to the gates, demanded arms and ammunition. The governor appearing to comply with this requisition, the gates were opened ; a great number being admitted over the first bridge, the bridges were drawn up ; in a short time a discharge of musketry was heard ; but whether from a pre-concerted scheme of De Launay, or provoked by the intemperate violence of the citizens, has never been ascertained*. But whoever might

* The testimonies on this subject are so extremely contradictory, that an impartial judge would find very great difficulty in developing truth, amidst the exaggerations of infuriated passions. Where we can place no reliance on the declarations of witnesses, our opinions must be formed from probability. De Launay could expect no advantage to the royal cause from this partial massacre. Instead of intimidating, he must have seen that it would enflame the Parisians to still more violent outrages. The cruelty imputed by the popular hypothesis was not found in any one authenticated instance to be a part of the royal policy. What purpose could it serve, from what motive could it spring ? On the part of de Launay, this hypothesis implies, that from mere wanton barbarity he perpetrated

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might be the aggressors, when the firing was heard, the passions of the populace were inflamed to such enthusiasm and fury, that the Bastile, the citadel of Paris, with its seemingly impassable ditches, and its inaccessible towers and ramparts, covered with a powerful artillery, was, after an attack of two hours, carried by storm. De Launay was immediately dragged to the Place de Greve, and miserably murdered. M. de Lofme, the major of the Bastile, met with a similar fate, and equal cruelty. When the place was captured, the Parisians loudly exclaimed, let us hang the whole garrison; but the prisoners were saved by the intercession of the national troops. The popular rage now manifested itself in a species of savageness long unknown in civilized Europe. They insulted and mutilated the remains of the dead, and exhibited their heads upon pikes to applauding multitudes; so dreadful were the ingredients already mingled with Gallic liberty. The victorious Parisians, exploring the

petrated mischief tending most powerfully to ruin himself, and injure his master's cause. Such a supposition is, no doubt, within the verge of possibility, but another view appears much more probable. The Parisians were in a state of the most violent rage and indignation against every supporter of government, and gave full vent to their passions both in words and actions. The Bastile they considered as a great bulwark of despotism, and the receptacle of its most miserable victims: entered into that gloomy mansion, whose horrors had so much occupied their imaginations, and stimulated their passions: and viewing its guards, whom they considered as the minions of atrocious tyranny, nothing could be more likely than that their conduct to the soldiers would be abusive, insulting, and furiously intemperate, and that thence quarrels might arise leading to a bloody catastrophe.

gloomy

gloomy dungeons of oppression, in expectation of delivering numbers of unfortunate victims, to their great surprize and disappointment, found only seven captives, four of whom were confined on charges of forgery, and three only were state criminals. So little was this engine of tyranny employed under the mild and humane Louis XVI. When the capture of the Bastile was reported at Versailles, the ministers at first treated it as an extravagant fiction of the democratic party, but they were soon too well assured of the fatal truth. In this situation they formed the absurd resolution of keeping the king in ignorance of what had passed, and urged Broglie to proceed immediately to the reduction of Paris; but he answered, that his troops were infected with the popular spirit, and that he could not rely on their efforts. The ministers and the princes were soon convinced that opposition would be ineffectual, and began to provide for their own safety. The Count de Artois had hitherto used every effort to inspire the king, and to prevent the downfall of the whole fabric; but he now saw that the attempt was hopeless. At midnight, the Duke de Liencourt, who was master of the wardrobe, forced his way into his majesty's apartment, and informed him of the whole. The king resolved on the most unconditional submission to the national assembly; and repairing thither without guards, early in the morning, he declared he resigned himself into their hands; and thus, deserted by its most efficacious supporters, attacked by the combined efforts of the people, and relinquished by its possessor, fell the absolute monarchy of France; and
here

C H A P. here the historical reader may date the commence-
XLIII. ment of the French revolution *.

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Louis arrived in the national assembly, and having declared that his sole reliance was on their wisdom and patriotism, intreated them to use their power for the salvation of the state. He informed them, that he had ordered all the troops to quit the neighbourhood of Paris and Versailles; the Parisians however being still afraid of sieges and blockades, proceeded with preparations for defence. They appointed M. La Fayette commander of their armed corps, to which they gave the name of national guards. The capital was now a great republic, and it soon was so sensible of its power, as to give the law, not only to the unfortunate sovereign, but to the national assembly and the whole kingdom. The national assembly sent a deputation, consisting of eighty-four members, with a view of restoring tranquillity. The Parisians received the deputies with every mark of respect and applause, but expressed a desire that the king himself should visit the city of Paris.. This humiliating measure Louis carried into execution on Friday the 17th of July, under a full conviction

* The susceptibility of the French character renders that people very easily impressed by any address to their senses, imagination, or passions. A song that was composed about this time had a still stronger effect than even that which is ascribed by our historian to the celebrated air *Lillibullero* * : this was the famous *Ca Ira*, both in the words and music skilfully adapted to the impetuous ardour of impassioned Frenchmen: in rapid strains and expressions, it announced the immediate downfall of existing establishments.

* See Hume, vol. viii. p. 300.

that

that he thereby encountered the peril of instant affassination. He was received by a body of twenty-five thousand national guards; and thus led in a melancholy procession, amidst the loud and continual acclamations of *Vive la nation*, while the ancient favourite cry of *Vive le roi* was not once heard. Being conducted to the hotel, he was obliged to accept the new cockade, and to hear an harangue from the popular leaders, charging the court with all the cruel designs that were reported to have been formed against the city of Paris. Having so clearly and positively denied this imputation, as to impress conviction on the most democratical of his hearers, he returned safely to Versailles, to the great joy of his friends, many of whom never expected to see him again. Meanwhile the princes, and some of the chief nobility, with many of the inferior courtiers, perceiving the popular party paramount, sought safety in flight. The national assembly having signified a wish that Mr. Neckar * should be recalled, that minister was invited to return to Paris, and other popular ministers were appointed. Some degree of tranquillity having been re-established at Paris, the national assembly proceeded to the formation of a new constitution. As the ground work on which they were to build a fabric, they began with forming a declaration of rights. This manifesto was introduced by a remark tending to

* Mr. Neckar was welcomed both at Versailles and Paris, with such demonstrations of general and excessive joy, that democratic writers compared it to the transports of the Romans on the return of Cicero from banishment.

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Declaration
of rights :

its funda-
mental
principle
the Rights
of Man.

shew, that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of human rights, are the sole causes of public misfortunes, and to avoid these evils, that it was necessary to define and explain those rights. The declaration contains the outlines of the doctrines afterwards held out by the various revolutionists, and, indeed, is the text that has given rise to the principal class of the comments so long the subject of literary and political discussion. Here was the noted principle brought forward which founded legitimate government upon the **NATURAL RIGHTS OF MAN**. This theory, however, supposing mankind susceptible of perfection, deduces its inferences from an assumption which it neither did nor could prove, and which daily experience disproved. Many of the remarks are, no doubt, abstractly true ; but they are useless, because they do not apply to circumstances either existing or likely to exist * : on this basis they proceeded to raise the new constitution.

The

* The following is a copy of the declaration of rights, consisting of seventeen articles :

I. Men were born, and always continue, equal in respect of their rights ; civil distinctions, therefore, can be founded only on public utility.

II. The end of all political associations is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man ; and these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance of oppression.

III. The nation is essentially the source of all sovereignty ; nor can any individual, or any body of men, be entitled to any authority which is not expressly derived from it.

IV. Political Liberty consists in the power of doing whatever does not injure another. The exercise of the natural rights of every man has no other limits than those which are necessary

to

The practical operation of the principles immediately manifested itself in the acts and proceedings of the national assembly, and the various classes of the French revolutionists. Manifold were the subjects of consideration; but the great and general object was subversion of establishment. In prosecuting this purpose, the energy, susceptibility, and violence of the French character, were clearly displayed.

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First acts of
the French
revolution-
ists. /
Great object
to subvert
establish-
ment.

to secure to every other man the free exercise of the same rights; and these limits are determinable only by the law.

V. The law ought to prohibit only actions hurtful to society. What is not prohibited by the law should not be hindered; nor should any one be compelled to that which the law does not require.

VI. The law is an expression of the will of the community. All citizens have a right to concur, either personally, or by their representatives, in its formation. It should be the same to all, whether it protects or punishes; and all being equal in its sight, are equally eligible to all honours, places, and employments, according to their different abilities, without any other distinction than that created by their virtues and talents.

VII. No man should be accused, arrested, or held in confinement, except in cases determined by the law, and according to the forms which it has prescribed. All who promote, solicit, execute, or cause to be executed, arbitrary orders, ought to be punished: and every citizen called upon or apprehended by virtue of the law, ought immediately to obey, and renders himself culpable by resistance.

VIII. The law ought to impose no other penalties than such as are absolutely and evidently necessary; and no one ought to be punished, but in virtue of a law promulgated before the offence, and legally applied.

IX. Every man being presumed innocent till he has been convicted, whenever his detention becomes indispensable, all rigour to him, more than is necessary to secure his person, ought to be provided against by the law.

X. No

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Licentious-
ness of the
press.

Twenty
thousand
literary men
stimulate
the mob to
outrage.

played. Freed from all the restraints which not only superstition and despotism, but religious and salutary controul, had formerly imposed, they now gave full vent to their dispositions. Their natural ardour was farther goaded to fury by demagogues. The licentiousness of the press even exceeded the licentiousness of the mob, and most powerfully prompted its atrocity. Twenty thousand literary men were daily and hourly employed, not as be-

X. No man ought to be molested on account of his opinions, not even on account of his religious opinions, provided his avowal of them does not disturb the public order established by the law.

XI. The unrestrained communication of thoughts and opinions, being one of the most precious rights of man, every citizen may speak, write, or publish freely, provided he is responsible for the use of his liberty in cases determined by law.

XII. A public force being necessary to give security to the rights of men and of citizens, that force is instituted for the benefit of the community, and not for the particular benefit of the persons to whom it is entrusted.

XIII. A common contribution being necessary for the support of the public force, and for defraying the other expences of government, it ought to be divided equally among the members of the community, according to their abilities.

XIV. Every citizen has a right, either by himself or his representatives, to a free voice in determining the necessity of public contributions, the appropriation of them, and of their amount, modes of assessment, and duration.

XV. Every community has a right to demand of all its agents an account of their conduct.

XVI. Every community in which a separation of powers and a security of rights is not provided for, wants a constitution.

XVII. The right to property being inviolable and sacred, no one ought to be deprived of it, except in cases of evident public necessity, legally ascertained, and on the condition of a previous just indemnity.

came

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came superior ability and knowledge, in restraining vicious passions, and in teaching the ignorant the way to virtue and happiness, but in exhorting and stimulating them to outrageous actions. Never was intellectual superiority more disgracefully debased by the venal panegyrist of corrupted courts, or the hired encomiast of titled stupidity and insignificance, than by these adulators of an infuriate populace. But even in scheming and promoting anarchy and disorder, the inventive, bold, and ready genius of Frenchmen appeared. A confederacy was framed which in its institution and effects, exhibited a new phenomenon in the history of political organs. A combination was first formed of literary men, to associate under the name of a *club*, at their meetings to concert measures which might give the tone to the mob, and through their overbearing influence direct the decrees of the national assembly, and the acts of all municipal, judicial, and executive bodies, and thus make the whole power of France ultimately depend upon their resolves. These demagogues invited into their society such of the populace as they conceived likely to become useful instruments, and exhorted them to construct other clubs, both in Paris, and through all the provinces; and that such Meetings should be connected, or to use a new revolutionary metaphor, *affiliated* together. These conventicles consisted first of literary votaries of the new philosophy, who promulgated and inculcated suitable doctrines, sentiments, and conduct. One of the clubs meeting in a convent formerly belonging to the Jacobins, assumed the

name

An engine
of govern-
ment new
in the
history of
political
establish-
ments.
CLUBS.

C H A P.
XLIII.1789.
Their influence
extended by
affiliation.

name of Jacobin Club*, which afterwards extending to appendant societies, gained a superiority over the rest, and became so noted throughout the world. In the first deliberations of the national assembly, these societies, guided by literary demagogues, and directing the populace, had a powerful influence. Many of the lawgivers were indeed members of the new institutions; and those who were most inimical to the existing establishments, and to rank and property, were held in the highest estimation, and were really the directors of the revolutionists. Various in detail as were the precepts of these innovators; in principle and object they were simple and uniform. Their lessons of instruction, or exhortations to practice, may be compressed in a few words. Religion is all folly; disregard religion and its ministers. Every establishment is contrary to natural right; pull down establishments. Order is an encroachment upon natural freedom; overturn all order. Property is an infringement upon natural equality; confiscate all property†. Such was the system generally received in the enthusiasm of reform, through a most extensive and populous nation, distinguished for promptness and fertility of genius, for boldness and activity of character, and by its very virtues rendering its errors more extensively pernicious. To follow through the various and manifold details, the doctrines and objects which guided the national assembly, would be

* Annual Register, 1790. Chap. I.

† See revolutionary publications at Paris 1789, *passim*.

foreign to our history; but assuredly it belongs to our subject to sketch the spirit and principal operations of a revolutionary system by which Britain was so essentially affected.

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1789.

The licentiousness of Paris spread through the provinces; and the peasants, having been long severely oppressed by seignorial tenures and privileges, conceived themselves now emancipated, and turned upon the proprietors with the most outrageous violence*. Reports of robberies, rapes, and murders, daily reached the assembly. Landed proprietors apprehended the plunder of their property; and some of the nobility, whose possessions were very great, were seized with a sudden impulse of sacrificing a large portion to secure the rest. On the 4th of August, the Viscount de Noailles, and the Duke d'Aguilon, proposed an equalization of taxes, and an abolition of feudal services. This offer striking the assembly and galleries with the warmest admiration, excited in the other proprietors a wish to emulate conduct which was so highly applauded. The nobles and clergy vied with each other in surrendering privileges of their orders, and both these estates concluded with sacrificing their manerial jurisdictions. So far there was nothing but voluntary cession, directed by preventive policy, and stimulated by praise, or flowing from enthusiasm. The next day it was proposed that tythes should be abolished, and church property should be seized by the state. This proposition the clergy eagerly combated, but

Lawless violence in the country.

The peasants turn on the proprietors.

Some of the nobility propose to sacrifice a large portion of their privileges and property. Admiration of the commons.

Proposition for the seizure of church property. Remonstrances of the clergy disregarded.

* Bertrand, vol. i. c. 11.

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their remonstrances were ineffectual; and at one blow all the immense property of such a numerous body was confiscated, without the least allegation of delinquency. The Abbe Sieyes, though a friend to the revolution, strongly remonstrated against this forfeiture, as commencing freedom with iniquity*. But the sound reasoning, even of a partizan, was unavailing against determined rapacity. Equality being the professed object of the revolutionists, it was proposed that all the provincial distinctions, the peculiar rights and privileges of each district should be abolished, and that, without any local diversity and immunity, or any regard to particular customs, usages, and prescriptions, the whole nation should be consolidated into one compact body. The deputies of privileged towns and districts surrendered the immunities of their constituents, all exclusive claims in every part of France were resigned; and the provinces which had possessed the right of taxing themselves, renounced the power of taxation. The parliaments which had so long held the judicial authority of France, and had been considered as the able, upright, and intrepid guardians of the public welfare, were annihilated. All the canon, ecclesiastical, and political codes of law, all the claims of the court of Rome, all the fees or taxes which it heretofore received, were abolished. Even the very systems of theology and metaphysics, which had prevailed for so many ages, fell, not under the regular and well-conducted force of reason, but the furious rage of innovation. In

Parliaments
are annihilated.

Immunities
are sacrificed.

The law and
policy of the
kingdom
are overturned.

* Bertrand, vol. i. chap. xii. and xiii.

a few days the whole law and policy of the nation were changed, a great part of its property was disarranged; and every thing had altered its ancient form and aspect. A revolution more comprehensive and complete in its objects, as well as more minute and particular in its details, than any which is recorded in the annals of mankind, was carried into effect by an assembly of men professing to deliberate, with little more reflection or discussion, than in a senate of prudent lawgivers and statesmen, would have been bestowed on the most ordinary municipal or local regulation. The nobility and clergy in the provinces, not having been impressed with the impassioned enthusiasm from which their delegates in the national assembly had so lavishly surrendered their rights of tythe, without their concurrence, very generally condemned a bounty that bestowed what did not belong to the donors. They were greatly enraged and grieved at the confiscation of their property, and could not think highly of a new system of government, the first specimens of whose character were irreligion and robbery. Resistance, however, they saw would be vain; and they were therefore compelled to acquiesce in the humiliating and plundering decrees. But the pecuniary pressure, the proximate cause of the present crisis, still continued. The peasants considered taxes as an infringement upon liberty, and refused payment; others followed their example, and there was no money to support government, or carry on the public business. After stating the national wants, Mr. Neckar asked for a loan of thirty millions of livres, but the subscription

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XLIII.

1789.
Scheme of
voluntary
contribu-
tions.

Gold and
silver uten-
sils carried
to the mint.

Prepara-
tions for the
new consti-
tution.

Authority
to be pos-
sessed by
the king.

not filled. A scheme for voluntary contributions was adopted, and from its novelty eagerly embraced by this volatile people. All ranks vied in bringing their silver and gold to the public treasury, nor was coin only produced, but also plate, and the minutest articles of dress. The members of the assembly themselves, in their bountiful patriotism, agreed to sacrifice their shoe-buckles to the exigencies of the community. The king and queen sent their gold and silver plate to the mint for coinage. These offerings, however, were very inadequate to the supply of the public wants. A scheme was proposed by Mr. Neckar, and after many strong objections and remonstrances, embraced by the national assembly, for applying one FOURTH of every man's annual income to the wants of the state*.

Having made these very momentous changes respecting corporate and private property, they proceeded now to new model their constitution, according to the declaration of rights. The assembly was divided into sections and committees†; to each of which was assigned a specific part of the new polity, to be prepared, and grooved with the rest. The first question considered respecting the constitution was of the very highest importance; what share of authority the king should possess in the new legislature? On the solution of this problem it was to depend whether the royal power should be strong enough to restrain the

* Annual Register, 1790. Chap. ii.

† Bertrand, vol. i. chap. 13.

violence of democracy. On the one hand, it was proposed that the king should possess a veto, or negative, in the passing of a law; on the other, that he should be merely the chief executorial magistrate, without any voice in the legislation. For the negative voice were ranged, not only all the friends of the ancient monarchy, but the majority of the nobility and clergy; now sensible that they had conceded too much; apprehensive that their total ruin was intended, and desirous in the kingly prerogative to preserve a bulwark which might afford some defence to the remaining rights, to resist the torrent of democracy. Against it was opposed the whole body of the commons, who containing many subordinate divisions, agreed in the general desire of reducing the monarchy. The question was agitated with great force and violence on both sides. The opposition of the privileged orders was represented by demagogues to arise from an intention of attempting a counter-revolution; and the people were transported into fury and alarm. Louis himself, ever desirous of accommodating differences, satisfying all parties, and maintaining tranquillity, made a proposal of a compromise, by which he should have a power of suspending a law during two legislatures; but that if the third assembly persisted in its support, he should be obliged to give it his sanction. This proposal proving satisfactory to both parties, a decree passed, conferring these prerogatives on the king, under the denomination of a *suspensive veto**. Another question was now dis-

*Suspensive
veto.*

* Bertrand, vol. ii. chap. xiv. *

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1789.
Question if
the assembly
was to be
composed
of one
or two
chambers.

Carried
that there
should be
only one.
The com-
mons re-
probate the
example of
Britain.
Settlement
of the
succession.

cussed, also of very great importance. Whether the national assembly should be composed of one or of two chambers. Lally Tolendal, Clermont, Mounier, and other leaders of the moderate reformers, were equally zealous with the republicans for the establishment of a free government; but, considering a limited monarchy as affording the fairest prospect of beneficial and permanent liberty, they ardently recommended a senate, and a house of representatives, which should controul the proceedings of each other, agreeably to the principle, and nearly after the model of the British constitution. From the narrow and interested impolicy of many of the nobles and clergy, who vainly hoped for the re-establishment of the three chambers, together with the predominance of the republicans, this proposal was entirely overruled. The commons reprobated every species of mixed government, and steadily abstaining from imitation of England, proposed, and carried, that the duration of the French legislative assembly should be only two years. Notwithstanding the rage for innovation, they confirmed the hereditary succession of the crown according to the Salic law. The friends of the Duke of Orleans eagerly contended that the assembly, by confirming the renunciation of the first Bourbon king of Spain,* should render their patron next heir after the king, his son, and brothers. But the assembly, however violent and precipitate in what concerned France only, cautiously refrained from giving umbrage to other

* Bertrand, vol. ii. chap. xiv.

powers; and avoided the discussion. Meanwhile the furious republicans, both in the clubs and the national assembly, resolved that the residence of the royal family, and the legislature, should be changed from Versailles to the capital, where they would be still more completely under the controul of democratic direction. The court, and especially the queen, conceived the greatest horror at the idea of a compulsory abode, among so tumultuous, bloody, and ferocious a people. A transaction which took place in the beginning of October, accelerated the removal of the king and his family to a scene which they had so much reason to dread.

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1789.

Ferocity of
the people

Among other causes of popular violence, famine still raged throughout France, but particularly in Paris and Versailles. To repress the tumults, additional troops were ordered to march to the royal habitation. The king himself was still allowed to have about his person a regiment of his own life-guards; and the newly arrived corps was the regiment of Flanders. The gentlemen of the stationary forces, on the arrival of the strangers, according to the established custom of military hospitality, gave their brother officers an entertainment. In the course of their festivity, when both hosts and guests were heated by wine, the king and queen, with the infant dauphin, visited the banquetting room. The royal mother carried the infant prince completely round the table. Meanwhile the music played an air* which the ladies of the court accompanied with the appropriate stanzas pathetically

enflamed
by scarcity.

Additional
troops
arrive at
Versailles.

Entertain-
ment given
by the
officers in
the palace
to the new
comers.
The royal
family visit
the ban-
quetting
room.
The queen
presents the
infant dau-
phin to the
officers.
Music
describes

* Bertrand, vol. ii. chap. xiv..

CHAP.
XLIII.

1719.
the suffer-
ings of a
captive
king.
Effects of
beauty,
music, and
wine.

describing the feelings and sufferings of a captive king*. The power of music and the charms of beauty, combining with inherent loyalty, inspired the company with an enthusiasm which wine drove beyond all bounds of caution. Drawing their swords, they drank copious bumpers to the august health of their illustrious visitors and their family, successively†, while the chief personages, having expressed their warmest gratitude, retired. In such a disposition of mind, no moderation could be expected. A scene of complete intoxication ensued, and exhibited without disguise, and with augmented fervour, the sentiments with which it commenced. All the extravagance followed which wine could produce on romantic fancies and impassioned hearts. The national cockades were by the offi-

* Taken from a dramatic work founded on the story of Richard Cœur de Lion's captivity when returning from the Holy Land, and beginning, "O Richard, O mon Roi"

† Bertrand, who gives a very particular account of this entertainment, mentions the following circumstance, which I do not recollect to have seen in any other publication. "I have (he says) been assured by two persons who were present at this entertainment, that the words *to the health of the nation* were also pronounced feebly by one of the guests, or one of the spectators, and that the not repeating or seconding this toast, was attended with no consequences. The custom of drinking to the health of the nation had not been then established, and one may be allowed, without a crime, to think that was not the moment for introducing such an innovation; yet one of the greatest crimes imputed to the *gardes-du-corps*, was their not being willing to drink to the health of the nation, that is to say, to their own health, for they were indisputably a part of the nation."

cers

cers of Flanders torn from their hats, and trampled under foot*; and in their place were substituted old royal cockades, supplied by the ladies of the court, who took white ribbands from their own head-dresses, to decorate the loyal officers, while the three coloured cockade was treated with contempt and scorn. This banquet was really no more than an excess of conviviality, at a season when prudence would have dictated reserve; but being exaggerated by all the circumstances which malicious invention could devise, filled Paris with the most violent rage. The innovating leaders pretended that the conduct of the officers and courtiers arose from counter-revolutionary projects, with exulting joy from the confident expectations of success: a conspiracy, they affirmed, was matured for the restoration of despotism, and that the queen was at its head. The carousal of the royalists, at the time that the people wanted bread, was a flagrant insult to the nation. These sentiments were disseminated by the various classes and factions that were friendly to innovation; but were spread with peculiar activity by the adherents of the Duke of Orleans.

Louis Philip Bourbon, Duke of Orleans, was the descendant and representative of the only brother of Louis XIV., and after the posterity of that monarch, next heir to the throne of France. In such an elevated rank, with riches far beyond the measure of any other European subject, he had devoted his youth to the most profligate debauchery: his vices, by their coarseness, excited the indignant contempt of a gentleman almost as much:

O. H. A. P.
XLIII.

1789.

The officers
trample the
national
cockade.

Report of
the enter-
tainment at
Paris.

Rage and
indignation
of the
revolution-
ists.

Character
and projects
of the Duke
of Orleans.

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XLIII.

1789.

as the enormity of his crimes called on him the detestation of every virtuous man. His wealth affording him the means of very extensive depravity, enabled him to corrupt great numbers of the youth, and even to make considerable advances in visiting the metropolis; and his habitation at the Palais Royal, far exceeded any other part of the French capital in variety, extent, and flagrancy of wickedness. Such was the mode of life by which this prince was distinguished by the time he had reached his fortieth year. His reputation, however, did not rest solely on uniform and habitual debauchery: other species of turpitude concurred in rendering him at once flagitious and execrable. Opulent as Orleans was, he was boundless in avarice. The Duc de Penthièvre, high admiral of France, was one of the wealthiest noblemen of his country. Orleans cast his eyes on the daughter of this minister, but the son Lamballe intervened: with this youth he cultivated a close intimacy, and according to the concurrent accounts of various writers*, was the means of shortening the brother's life, after which he married the sister, now heir of her father's possessions. He moreover proposed to secure the reversion of Penthièvre's very lucrative post. With this view he entered the navy, and the first time he saw an enemy, a descendant of Henry IV. betrayed the despicable degeneracy of personal cowardice†.

* See Playfair on Jacobinism.—Adolphus's memoirs.—Picture of Paris, &c.

† In D'Orvillier's running fight with Admiral-Keppel. See this History, vol. iii. p. 81.

Such

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1763.

Such an exhibition effectually destroyed all his pretensions to naval promotion; and he conceived the blackest vengeance against the royal family, because the king would not entrust the supreme direction of his navy to a person who was afraid to fight: various circumstances also rendered the queen the petulant object of his hatred. The commencing discontents in France opened to him prospects not only of revenge, but ambition: he hoped by fomenting disaffection to pave the way for the overthrow of the royal family, and his own advancement to the regency, if not to the throne. Weak as well as wicked, in seeking the downfall of the reigning sovereign, he promoted and headed attacks upon the monarchical authority; and what he sought by villany, by folly laboured to impair. He did not reflect that the doctrines which he promoted tended to overturn the crown which he pursued. He was so infatuated as to suppose that the bold and able leaders of a revolution which annihilated all adventitious distinctions, would labour to exalt a person, who, destitute of genius and of courage, had none but adventitious distinctions to boast. Since the subversion of the old government, he had abetted the most violent and licentious proceedings of the revolutionary mobs. Sagacious agitators at once saw his designs, and their futility, and professing to be his agents, used him as their dupe. The most eminent of his declared partisans at this time was Mirabeau, who at certain periods appears to have desired the promotion of Orleans to be regent of the kingdom,

in

CHAP.
XLIII.

1789.

The mob
determines
to bring
the king to
Paris.

Movement
of the wo-
men for that
purpose.
They hang
priests and
aristocrats.

Expedition
to Ver-
sailles.

in the expectation of being the supreme director himself. Mirabeau very actively promoted the rage of the Parisians : he and his agents pretended to impute the scarcity to the machinations of the aristocrats, and the absence of the royal family; and encouraged the popular cry for the removal of the king to Paris. He promoted the belief of a conspiracy by the queen, and even intimated an intention of impeaching her Majesty*, as a conspirator for destroying the freedom of the people, and keeping bread from the Parisians. These topics being repeated in the capital, the malignity of the Orleans faction, revolutionary enthusiasm, and popular licentiousness, concurred with the scarcity in producing a determination to hasten to Versailles to demand of the king bread, punishment of the aristocrats, and especially the guards. A multitude of the lowest women undertook this expedition ; these amazons broke open the town-house, seized the arms there deposited, and meeting on the stairs a priest, required no farther proofs of his guilt than his dress ; and commenced their orgies by hanging him to a lamp-post. With the yell of infuriate savages they set out for Versailles, joined by Maillard, a creature of Orleans, and a favourite spokesman in the Palais Royal, with a few of his associates. They proceeded on their march : and meeting two travellers in the dress of gentlemen, they concluded them to be aristocrats, and hanged them without further enquiry. Arriving at Versailles, they sent Maillard to the national assembly,

* Bertrand, vol. ii. chap. 17.

to demand the immediate punishment of the aristocrats and the life-guards. The assembly sent their own president with a deputation of the women to wait upon the king. The deputies being thus employed, their constituents set about drinking—an operation for which their hasty departure in the morning had not allowed them time, and the road had not afforded materials. In half an hour the greater number of them were completely intoxicated. Thus prepared, they broke into the national assembly, not only filled the galleries, but took their seats among the lawgivers, overwhelmed them with the grossest and loudest obscenity and imprecations. At last two of them, observing the president's chair to be empty, took possession of it themselves, and dictated the subjects of discussion. Such, even then, was French liberty; such were the assessors who controuled the deliberations of men assembled on the most momentous business that could occupy legislators. While the female army was thus employed at Versailles, the fermentation at Paris rose to an extraordinary pitch, and all classes of the populace burned with anxiety to know the result of the expedition. The national guards became so impatient, that they compelled their officers to lead them to Versailles, and declared their resolution to join in obliging the king to repair to Paris. La Fayette, the commander, though a friend to the new constitution, was favourably disposed to the person of Louis *, as well as to the authority † which the new system had conferred on the sovereign, and was

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1789

The women overcraw the legislature, break into the assembly, and take the president's chair.

* Bertrand, chap. xvi.

† Bouillé's Memoirs.

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1789.

the adversary of violent republicans on the one hand, and of the Orleans faction on the other. He endeavoured to dissuade his soldiers from this expedition but found that the attempt would be impracticable; he therefore tried to moderate its operation. As the guards made no scruple of publicly proclaiming their opinions and sentiments on national affairs, La Fayette and his officers easily discovered whence their present thoughts and intentions originated. The grenadiers informed the general, without reserve, they understood the king to be an idiot, therefore they (the grenadiers) would not hesitate to declare, that matters must go on much better by the appointment of a regent. As this was the peculiar language and doctrine of Mirabeau and other directors of the Orleans faction, there could be little doubt where either the politics or the march of the guards originated*. Many of the soldiers also declared an intention of massacring the queen. The Parisian guards arrived at Versailles late in the evening, and were most cordially received by the national guards at Versailles, the mob of the same place, and the amazons of Maillard†. The most ferocious of the guards and other mob in the morning surrounded the palace, and, with dreadful howlings, denounced the murder of the queen; and the palace was filled with consternation. But Marie Antoinette was not frightened. Amid crimes, (says Bertrand), alarms,

* Annual Register 1790, page 48.

† Bertrand informs us, that this man was rather turbulent than malignant, and even tried to preserve some degree of moderation among his troop; which was certainly, in their present condition, no easy task.

confusion,

confusion, and general stupor, the queen majestically displayed the sublimest and most heroic character. Her constant serenity, her countenance, firm and ever full of dignity, transfused her own courage into the soul of all who approached her. On that day she received a great deal of company. To some who expressed uneasiness she replied, "I know they are come from Paris to demand my head; but I learned of my mother not to fear death, and I will wait for it with firmness." Her answer to the advice given to her, to fly from the dangers that threatened her, does not less deserve to be recorded.—"No, no," said she; "never will I desert the king and my children: I will share whatever fate awaits them." Some hours of sleep happily came to repair her exhausted strength, and to enable her to encounter on the next day, with equal magnanimity, dangers still more horrid. About half past five in the morning, the repose of the princess received a frightful disturbance. An immense croud endeavoured to break down the palace gate, and after murdering two of the life-guards, effected their purpose. Dreadful howlings announced their entrance into the palace: they soon arrived at the foot of the great staircase, and ran up in crowds, uttering imprecations and the most sanguinary threats against the queen*. Before six they forced their way to the apartments of the royal consort. The centinel, Monsieur de Miomandre, perceiving the ruffians, called out, "Save the queen; her life is sought: I stand alone against two thousand tigers." Her majesty escaped by a private

The mob
assault the
palace;

* Bertrand, vol. ii. p. 112.

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XLIII.

1789.
attempt to
murder the
queen;
prevented
by the he-
roism of her
defenders.

The king
and queen
agree to
depart for
Paris.

Mournful
procession of
a degraded
monarch.

passage into the king's apartment. Louis, fly-
ing to her relief, was met by his own guards, who
escorted him back to his apartments, where he
found his queen and children arrived. The rus-
sians now endeavoured to force the antichamber,
which a body of loyal guards defended with heroic
courage; but their number was decreasing under
the murdering hands of the banditti. The assassins
had almost entered the apartment when the per-
suasions and supplications of Fayette and his officers
induced them to desist. Meanwhile, the furious
mob in the outer court demanded the appearance
of the king and queen: the royal pair was per-
suaded to present themselves on the balcony. An
universal cry arose, To Paris, to Paris. Refusal or
remonstrance would have been instant death: the
king's assent was immediately notified, and the fu-
rious rage converted into the most tumultuous joy.
Within an hour began the procession, more melan-
choly and humiliating to the king and queen than
any which history records of captive princes exhi-
bited as spectacles to triumphant enemies. The
sovereign of a mighty and splendid monarchy; so
long and so recently famed for learning, arts, sci-
ences, and civilization; renowned for the genero-
sity, honour, and valour of its nobility; the courage
and discipline of its numerous and formidable
armies; their zealous and enthusiastic affection for
their king and his family; the ardent loyalty of the
whole people; was now, without foreign invasion or
war; without any avowed competitor for his throne;
even without any acknowledged rebellion of his
subjects, with his queen and family, dragged from
his

his palace, and led in triumph by the offscourings of his metropolis, the lowest and most despicable of ruffians, the meanest and most abandoned trulls.

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1789.

Farther
proceedings
at Paris.

From the 6th of October 1789, the king is to be considered as a prisoner at Paris. Mounier, equally the friend of liberty and of monarchy, from these horrid transactions augured the downfall of both. He and other penetrating observers saw that the outrages were not the mere accidental ebullitions of a temporary and local frenzy, but the effects of a general cause. He, Lally Tolendal, and others of the moderate party, who had been the vigorous and ardent advocates of a limited monarchy, now seeing their efforts unavailing, seceded from the assembly. But the just and virtuous Mounier, before his retirement, established an enquiry into the recent massacres. The national assembly followed the king to Paris. The republican party now began to express suspicions of the Duke of Orleans, which they had before entertained; though finding him and his creatures instrumental to their designs, they had made use of his agency as long as it was wanted. Become now so powerful, they thought proper to drop the mask, and intimated to him through Fayette, that his presence in France was incompatible with the public good: he was accordingly compelled to retire into England. At this time the Parisian mob promulgated its resolution to take the administration of justice into its own hands; and accordingly hanged* several aristocrats (especially bakers) at the lamp-post. The assembly, from regard to its own safety, resolved to

The existing
government
endeavours
to quell the
mob.

* Annual Register, 1790.

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Severe prosecutions
for that
purpose.

Effects of
the French
revolution
in Britain.
Detesting
the old go-
vernment,
and not ac-
quainted
with the
new, Bri-
tains approve
the change
as friendly
to liberty.

Sentiments
of various
classes.

prevent so summary proceedings. They passed a very effective decree, by which the municipal magistrates were obliged to proclaim martial law whenever the mob proceeded to outrage. They instituted a criminal inquiry into the late murders; several ring-leaders were hanged, and terror thus was struck into the rest. Some degree of tranquillity was established in the metropolis; and the assembly proceeded with less interruption and greater security in its schemes of legislation.

Such were the leading features and principal acts of the French revolution in 1789. Britons rejoiced at the overthrow of the old French government because so contrary to the liberty which they themselves enjoyed. A change from such a system they concluded must certainly be an improvement. They trusted that the alterations in France would generate a government similar to the British constitution. Presuming beneficial effects from the French revolution, the greatest part of the people rejoiced at this event. The generous feelings of Englishmen sympathized with the assertors of liberty, before they had time and opportunity to ascertain its effects on the situation and characters of its new votaries. Men whose classical erudition had a greater influence in forming their opinions than experience and reason; who judged of political wisdom more from the practice of the ancient republics than from history, investigation of character, and circumstances, admired what they conceived to be approaches to the democratic institutions of Greece and Rome. Scholars, chiefly eminent for philology, were, with very few exceptions, admirers of a system

system * that they supposed similar to those which they found delineated and praised in their favourite languages. Literary men of a higher class than mere linguists; persons of profound metaphysical and moral philosophy, but of more genius and speculative learning than conversancy with practical affairs, commended the lawgivers of France for taking for their guide the “polarity of reason, instead of following the narrow and dastardly † coastings of usage, precedent, and authority.” There were many who, forming their ideas of civil and political liberty from their own abstractions more than from experience, admired the French for declaring the equality of mankind, and making that principle the basis of government, instead of modifying it according to expediency. This latter class comprehended the greater number of eminent projectors of civil and ecclesiastical reform, who long had considered even Britain herself deficient in the liberty which their fancies represented as deducible from the rights of man. Various political societies had been constituted for different purposes of reform, but of late years the most active of them had manifested principles too abstract and visionary † to be practicably consistent with the British constitution, or indeed, any form of government founded upon an opinion that human nature is imperfect, and requires controuls proportioned to the prevalence of

* The instances are numerous, as the observing reader can easily recollect without particularization.

† See *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*.

† See *Priest's Discourse of the love of our country*, November 4, 1789, in *Priestley*, *passim*; also, *Writings of their votaries*, *passim*.

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passion. These societies * praised the French revolutionists, and recommended their example as a glorious pattern for the human race. They sent congratulations to the French leaders. A regular official correspondence was carried on between the members of private clubs in England, and the leaders of the republican revolution in France. Statesmen of high rank, and of the highest talents †, venerating liberty in general, presumed French liberty would render its votaries happy; and imputing the aggressions of France on this and other nations to the corrupt ambition of her court, anticipated tranquillity from her renovated state, and rejoiced at a change that appeared to them to forebode peace to Britain and to Europe. These admirers of the French revolution were stimulated by British patriotism as well as love of freedom. The excesses they saw and lamented, but tracing them to their source, they imputed them to enthusiasm; which, reasoning from experience, they trusted, though furiously violent in its operation on such characters, would gradually subside, and leave only the ardour of useful reform and improvement. The ablest men on the side of administration, abstained from delivering any opinion concerning the internal proceedings of a foreign state which had not then interfered with ours. At the end of 1789, by far the greater number of all classes and parties in Britain

* Revolution Club and Society for Constitutional Information.

† See Speeches of Messrs. Fox and Sheridan in session 1790.

was friendly to the French revolution; and its favourers included a very great portion of genius and learning, while none was hitherto exerted by our countrymen on the opposite side. Such was the impression which this extraordinary change of Gallic polity produced in the most liberal and enlightened of neighbouring nations.

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CHAP. XLIV,

Meeting of parliament.—At the beginning of the session little debate or discussion.—Mr. Fox takes an opportunity of praising the French revolution—commends the conduct of the French army in supporting the cause of the people against an arbitrary court—likenes them to the English army supporting the Prince of Orange—deems the French revolution, in many respects, similar to the deliverance of England.—His friend and political associate, Mr. Burke, manifests a different opinion—unfolds his view of the French revolution—considers its principles, and the characters on which they are operating—points out its first effects, and deduces the outrageous excesses from its nature and doctrines—deprecates the French system as a model for England—denies the allegations of similarity between the French and British revolution—praises the excellence of the British constitution, as contrasted with the French system.—Mr. Sheridan concurs in Mr. Fox's praises of the French revolution.—Mr. Pitt, praising the British constitution, delivers no opinion on the French system.—Dissenters again propose to seek the repeal of the test act.—Circumstances apparently favourable to the hopes of the dissenters—they are strenuously opposed by the members of the church.—Work entitled, Review of the case of the Protestant Dissenters.—Dissenters trust their cause to the transcendent talents of Mr. Fox—his view of the subject, and answers to objections.—Mr. Pitt continues to treat admissibility to offices as a mere question of expediency—deems the leaders of the dissenters inimical to our establishment—adduces from the conduct of the dissenters, and the situation of political affairs arguments against the repeal.—Mr. Burke speaks on the same side—Majority against the proposed repeal.—Mr. Flood proposes a plan for a parliamentary reform—his subtle theory is controverted by Mr. Windham—
withdraws

withdraws his motion. — Petitions from manufacturers of tobacco, praying to repeal the law subjecting them to excise. — A motion to that effect by Mr. Sheridan—is negatived. — Financial statements.—Prosperous situation of the country. —Mr. Dundas presents an account of our East India possessions —Libels against the commons on account of the management of Hastings's trial—censured.—Dispute with Spain.—Nootka Sound.—Insult offered by Spain—satisfaction demanded.—Conduct of Spain—King's message to parliament.—Parliament unanimously pledge their support of the king in vindicating the rights of Britain.—Diffolution of parliament.—Warlike preparations.—Diplomatic discussion between Britain and Spain.—Spain attempts to interest France.—The French nation is inimical to war with England.—Spain, hopeless of aid, yields to the demands of Britain.—The disputes are adjusted in a convention.

THE British parliament had sitten so late in the preceding year, that it did not meet till the 21st of January 1790. In the opening speech, his majesty mentioned the continuance of the war in the North and East of Europe, and informed the house that the internal situation of different parts of the continent engaged his majesty's most serious attention. Concerned as he was at the interruption of tranquillity, he was persuaded his parliament would join him in entertaining a deep and grateful sense of the favour of providence, which continued to his subjects the increasing advantages of peace, and the uninterrupted enjoyment of those invaluable blessings which they had so long derived from our excellent constitution. His Majesty informed them, that during the recess of parliament, he had been under the necessity of adopting measures for preventing the exportation, and facilitating the importation

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Meeting of
parliament.

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At the beginning of the session there is little debate or discussion

Mr. Fox takes an opportunity of praising the French Revolution ;

ation, of corn. The addresses were voted without opposition or debate ; an act of indemnity was proposed, and unanimously carried, respecting the order of council about grain.

During the first weeks of the session, there was scarcely any parliamentary discussion, but afterwards some of the most striking efforts of eloquence arose from a subject which was not properly before the house. Such a momentous event as the French revolution, interesting all enlightened men, had very early engaged the ardent mind of Mr. Fox. This illustrious senator venerated and admired liberty ; and contemplating the Gallic change, estimated its nature and value by the happiness which, he conceived, from overturning an arbitrary government, it would bestow upon many millions. He spoke with transport and exultation of a great people breaking their chains on the heads of their oppressors, and celebrated the particular acts, both civil and military, that had been most instrumental in effecting the change. As a man, he rejoiced in the subversion of despotism, and as a Briton, in a state from which he foreboded tranquillity to this country. When the army estimates were under consideration*, this distinguished orator first promulgated to parliament his opinions concerning the French revolution. The military establishments proposed were nearly the same as in the former year. Messrs. Pitt and Grenville contended, that though there was no reason to apprehend hostilities from any foreign power, yet the unsettled state of Europe, and the internal situation of several parts of it made it necessary for us to keep

* February 9th, 1790. See parliamentary reports. 7
ourselves

ourselves in such a condition as might enable us to act with vigour and effect if occasion should require our exertions. It was (they argued) a preposterous economy to tempt an attack by our weakness, and for a miserable present saving to hazard a great future expence. Our foreign alliances had been approved by all parties, as necessary for the preservation of that balance of power in Europe upon which the permanence of its tranquillity depended; but they could only be rendered effectual for their purpose by our ability to support them with an adequate force. Mr. Fox argued, that our ancient rival and enemy, by her internal disturbances, probably would be disabled from offering us any molestation for a long course of years; and the new form that the government of France was likely to assume would make her a better neighbour, and less propense to hostility, than when she was subject to the cabal and intrigues of ambitious and interested statesmen*. He applauded the conduct of the French soldiers during the late commotions: by refusing to obey the dictates of the court, that army had set a glorious example to all the military bodies of Europe; and had shewn, that men, by becoming soldiers;

commends
the conduct
of the French
army in
supporting
the people
against an
arbitrary
court.
Likens
them to the

* Mr. Fox's expectation of tranquillity to other states from the prevalence of freedom in France, even had there been nothing peculiar in the nature of that freedom, and the habits and dispositions of its votaries, seems to have arisen more from theory than from the actual review of the history of free countries. Had the comprehensive and full mind of this philosophical politician called before him his own extensive knowledge of the actions of mankind, he would have immediately perceived that free nations have been as propense to hostility as the subjects of an arbitrary prince. See the several histories of the ancient republics in the Greek, Latin, or modern languages: in our own tongue Ferguson, Giffes, and Mitford.

did

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the English
army sup-
porting the
Prince of
Orange.

His friend
and politic-
al associa-
te, Mr. Burke,
manifests a
different
opinion;

did not cease to be citizens. Their conduct (he said) resembled the behaviour of the patriotic soldiers of England when the Prince of Orange landed to assist in preserving our civil and religious liberties: the French revolution, indeed, in many respects was like to the glorious event which established and secured the liberties of England.

To these doctrines Mr. Fox found an opponent in a very eminent senator, with whom he had coincided during the greater part of his parliamentary life. Habituated to profound meditation on important questions in political philosophy, and thoroughly conversant with history, Mr. Burke had applied himself, with the most watchful attention, to observe the details, and to study the principles, of this extraordinary change. He had reprobated the old government of France; and although he thought it, in the reign of Louis XVI. softened in its exercise by the progress of civilization, and the personal character of the monarch, still he deemed the welfare of the people to rest on an unstable basis, and to require very considerable reform before it could be a beneficial system. But esteeming arbitrary power a great evil, he knew that unwise efforts to shake it off might produce more terrible calamities. He venerated the spirit of liberty as, when well-directed and regulated, a means of human happiness; his respect for it, in every individual case, was proportionate to his opinion of its probable tendency to produce that end, where he had not actual experience to ascertain its effects. It was not merely the possession of it that constituted it a blessing, but the enjoyment of it to such an extent, and with such regulations as could make it subsidiary to virtue and happiness. Its operation,

ration, as a blessing or a curse, depended, he thought, on its intrinsic nature, compounded with the character of its subjects, and, in a certain degree, extrinsic causes; and he uniformly controverted* those doctrines of the rights of man which would allow the same freedom to all persons, and in all circumstances. Neither did he conceive, that every one state, though refined, was equally fit for the beneficial exercise of liberty as every other state, which was not more refined. The controul, he thought, must be strong in the direct ratio of passion, as well as the inverse ratio of knowledge and reason. Having long viewed, with anxiety, the new philosophy become fashionable in France, he bestowed the most accurate attention on the designs of its votaries, as they gradually unfolded themselves. A sagacity, as penetrating as his views were comprehensive, discovered to him the nature of those principles which guided the revolutionists, as well as the characters on which they were operating. The notions of liberty that were cherished by the French philosophy he accounted speculative and visionary, and in no country reducible to salutary practice: he thought they proposed much less restraint than was necessary to govern any community, however small, consisting of men as they are known from experience; he conceived also that the volatile, impetuous, and violent character of the French, demanded in so great a nation, much closer restraints than were requisite in many other states. From the same philosophy which generated their extravagant notions

unfolds his view of the French revolution; considers its principles, and the characters on which they were operating.

* See Life of Burke, passim.

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points out
its first
effects,

and deduces
its out-
rageous ex-
cesses from
its nature
and doc-
trines.

of freedom proceeded also infidelity. He had many years before* predicted that the joint operation of these causes, unless watchfully and steadily opposed, would overturn civil and religious establishments, and destroy all social order. The composition of the national assembly, the degradation of the nobility, the abolition of the orders, the confiscation of the property of the church, and many other acts, tended to confirm the opinion which he had formed. Much as he detested the outrages, he reprobated the principles more, and foresaw that in their unavoidable operation, they would lead to far greater enormities: in the spirit and details of the new constitution, he did not expect either happiness, or even permanent existence. The vicinity of France to England made him apprehensive lest the speculations of that country should make their way into this, and produce attempts against a constitution founded on observation and experience, and not on visionary theories. The approbation manifested by many Britons, both of the doctrines and proceedings of the French revolutionists, increased his apprehension. When he found that his friend, of whose wisdom and genius he entertained so very exalted an opinion,

* This was the opinion which he had maintained of infidelity and speculative politics in general, in his vindication of natural society, and in his letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, and of French infidelity and speculative politics in particular, in his speech after returning from France in 1773;* and in all his speeches and writings, whenever the occasion required his admonition.

* Life of Burke, p. 161.

was among the admirers of the recent changes in France; he was anxious lest a statesman to whose authority so much weight was due, should be misunderstood to hold up the transactions in that country as a fit object of our imitation. Our patriotic ancestors had with cautious wisdom guarded against the contagion of French despotism, which had not only infected our sovereigns Charles and James, but also made some impression on many of their subjects. The danger in the last ages, he observed, was from an example of tyranny in government, and intolerance in religion. The disease was now altered, but far more likely to be infectious. Our present danger arose from atheism instead of bigotry, anarchy instead of arbitrary power. Through an admiration of men professing to be the votaries of liberty, those who did not thoroughly examine the real features of the French revolution, might be led to imitate the excesses of an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody, and tyrannical democracy*. He severely reprobated the conduct of the army: the abstract proposition that soldiers ought not to forget they were citizens, he did not combat; but applied to any particular case, it depended entirely on the circumstances: in the recent conduct of the French guards, it was not an army embodied under the respectable patriot citizens of the state, in resisting tyranny; it was the case of common soldiers deserting from their officers, to join a furious and licentious populace. The conduct of the

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He repro-
bates it as
an example
to England.

* See Parliamentary Debates, Feb. 9, 1790.

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He controverts the allegation of similarity between the French and British revolutions, and praises the British constitution as contrasted with the French system.

British soldiery in 1688, was totally different from the conduct of the French soldiery in 1789. William of Orange, a prince of the blood royal of England, was called in by the flower of the English aristocracy to defend its ancient constitution, and not to level all distinctions. To this prince, so warmly invited, the aristocratic leaders who commanded the troops, went over with their several corps, as to the deliverer of their country : military obedience changed its object ; but military discipline was not for a moment interrupted in its principle. After enumerating the constituents and acts of the French revolution, he contended that in almost every particular, and in the whole spirit of the transaction, that change differed from the alteration effected by Britain. " We," said Mr. Burke, " took solid securities ; settled doubtful questions ; and corrected anomalies in our law. In the stable fundamental parts of our constitution, we made no revolution ; no, not any alteration at all ; we did not weaken the monarchy ; perhaps it might be shewn that we strengthened it very considerably. The church was not impaired ; the nation kept the same ranks, the same privileges, the same franchises, the same rules for property. The church and state were the same after the revolution that they were before, but better secured in every part."

Mr. Sheridan concurs in Mr. Fox's views of the French revolution.

Mr. Sheridan declared that he entirely disagreed from Mr. Burke concerning the French revolution, and expressed his surprize that a senator whose general principles had been uniformly so friendly to liberty, and to the British constitution, could declare

clare or feel an indignant and unqualified detestation of all the acts of the patriotic party in France. He conceived theirs to be as just a revolution as ours; proceeding upon as sound a principle, and a greater provocation. Abhorring their excesses, he imputed them to the depravity of the old government, the sentiments and characters which despotism formed. He himself regarded the French revolution as a glorious struggle for liberty, and wished its supporters the fullest success. Concerning the British revolution, he no less differed from Mr. Burke. That event was founded on the same principle with the French change; regard for the rights of man. It overturned tyranny, gave real efficient freedom to this country, which he would wish to see diffused throughout the world*. Mr. Pitt testified his high approbation of the principles laid down concerning our excellent

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* Mr. Sheridan's admiration of the French revolution appears to have arisen first from considering it as a triumph of liberty over despotism, in which estimate he had not paid an adequate attention to its peculiar nature and principles; and secondly, from an idea that in principle it resembled our revolution, though dissimilarity had been very clearly and strongly stated by Mr. Burke, and that statement, though not admitted, had not been overturned by Mr. Sheridan, or any of his supporters*. His ardent wish for the general diffusion of a liberty producing the greatest blessings to Britain, overlooked the diversities of national characters in different countries. From a partial consideration of the case, instead of an accurate and complete view of every circumstance, and its whole character, appeared to arise the prepossessions of many men of genius and patriotism in favour of the French revolution.

* See Parliamentary Debates, February 1790.

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Mr. Pitt,
praising the
British con-
stitution,
delivers no
opinion on
the French
system.

constitution; for these he declared this country to the latest posterity ought gratefully to revere the name of Mr. Burke. With that caution which, advancing all that was necessary, abstained from declarations not required by the occasion, Mr. Pitt confined his applause to that part of Mr. Burke's speech which referred to the constitution of Britain. That was a subject of discussion that could never be foreign to a British parliament: concerning the French revolution, as affecting, or likely to affect France itself, he delivered no opinion.

Colonel Phipps and Sir George Howard, as military men, strongly objected to the panegyric pronounced by Mr. Fox, on the French guards, as a model of military conduct, and contrasted their desertion of their master, and junction with rioters, with the behaviour of the British troops, during the disturbances of 1780. Our soldiers did not, in violation of their oaths, and of their allegiance, join anarchy and rebellion, but feeling as citizens and soldiers, patiently submitted to the insults of the populace; in spite of provocation, maintained the laws, and acted under the constituted authorities of the realm.

Dissenters
again pro-
pose to
seek the
repeal of
the test act.

The dissenters, encouraged by the smallness of the majority which had rejected Mr. Beaufoy's motion of the former year, persevered in their application to parliament, and spared no efforts, either by general appeals to the public, or by canvassing particular members of the legislature; nor were grounds wanting to excite their sanguine hopes of success. The French revolution was favored by a considerable

considerable number of Britons, who venerating the principles of liberty that were enjoyed by themselves, regarded with pleasure the supposed diffusion of freedom to their neighbours. This approbation of the Gallic system, in many was not without a tinge of their peculiar doctrines; and they began to think that the highest perfection of a free government consisted in exemption from restraint. Hence great numbers, totally unconnected with the dissenters, and before quite indifferent about their peculiar views and interests, became zealous advocates for the repeal of the test and corporation acts, as inimical to the rights of man, lately promulgated in the neighbouring nation. On these visionary theories the claims of the dissenters were maintained in periodical publications*, which were employed in promoting their cause, and in other occasional works produced for their service. The leaders of the non-conformists having declared their enmity to the national religion, found ready and willing auxiliaries among those who had no religion at all. The deists, encouraged by the aspect of affairs in France to hope for the speedy diffusion of infidelity, or as they phrased it, *light*, eagerly joined in a measure tending to weaken the great bulwark of national faith. From the time of the French revolution, we may date a coalition between the deists and the Socinian dissenters, which, in its political or religious effects, afterwards extended to many others. Republicans, aware of the close connection between the church and monarchy, most readily joined a class of men

Circum-
stances
apparently
favourable
to it.

* See Analytical Review, passim.

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who were alleged to seek the downfall of our ecclesiastical establishment; a change, which they well knew, would tend to the overthrow of the monarchy. Besides this new accession of strength, the circumstance of an approaching election appeared also favourable to the attempt of the dissenters, on account of their great weight and influence in many counties and corporations, and their avowed determination to exert them on the ensuing occasion, in the support of such candidates only as were known, or should promise to be their supporters*. Farther to strengthen their cause, they proposed to consolidate with their own, the interests of the Roman catholic dissenters, and from the various constituents of their force, they had sanguine expectations of success.

They are strenuously opposed by members of the church.

Work entitled *Review of the case of Protestant Dissenters*.

On the other hand, the friends of the church, though not so early in their preparations, were fully as vigorous when they did commence. Less numerous, but more forcible, literary efforts were made in defence of our ecclesiastical establishment. The case was argued from the probable tendency of dissent, from actual experience of the general conduct of dissenters, and from the present state of political affairs. On the first head it was observed, that ill-will to the establishment † must in

* This mode of proceeding is much blamed by eminent, but moderate members of their own body, whose opinion I have heard very lately in personal conversation.

† See *Review of the case of protestant dissenters*; a celebrated pamphlet imputed to Dr. Horsey.

all

all governments belong to the character of the dissenter, if he be an honest man, however it may be softened by his natural good disposition, or restrained by political sagacity. A dissenter may occasionally support an establishment which he hates, if he foresee that its ruin would raise another from which his party would meet with less indulgence*. But a preference to his own sect is in itself a virtuous principle; every dissenter must be inclined to use any influence or authority with which an imprudent government may entrust him, to advance his sect in the popular esteem, and to increase its numbers. He will employ all means that appear to himself fair and justifiable, to undermine the church, if he hope that its fall may facilitate the establishment of his own party, or some other more congenial to his own. In all this, the crime is not in the man, but in the government entrusting him with a power, which he cannot but misuse. The man himself, all the while, supposes he is doing good, and his country service; and the harm which he may effect under the notion of doing good, will be the greater in proportion to his abilities and virtues: on these undeniable principles the policy of a test is founded. To confirm arguments from probable tendency, appeals were made to facts; and the history of dissenters was traced from the first germs of puritanism to the present time. Under certain restrictions, they had

* The dissenters often cited their fidelity to the house of Hanover, and enmity to the Stuarts. This remark was probably intended to account for their zeal.

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been beneficial to the community, but without these restrictions, they had been hurtful. This position was illustrated by views of their proceedings during the last century; from the attainment of partial advantage, to the overthrow of the church and monarchy, the destruction of rank, confiscation of property, cruel persecutions, and massacres. The principles which had produced such enormities were now cherished and supported, and wanted only predominant power to give them effect. Dr. Priestley, followed by a numerous tribe of votaries, had published his enmity to the church; while Dr. Price had no less publicly proclaimed his enmity to monarchy. They and their disciples had, from the downfall of the orders in France, become more eager in their expectations, more confident in their boasts, and more incessant in their efforts. For these and other reasons founded on the same principles, the most eminent of the prelates, the body of the clergy, and the friends of the church, called to the people to assist them in defending the ecclesiastical establishment. The dissenters, to have an advocate of abilities proportioned to their conception of the importance of the question, entrusted the discussion of their cause to the brilliant and powerful talents of Mr. Fox; and on the 2d of March the orator brought the subject before the house of commons. Acquainted with the arguments employed by Dr. Horsely, and other champions of the church, he directed his reasoning chiefly to impugn their allegations, and pursued nearly the order of those whom he wished to confute. It was, he contended, unwarrantable to infer *a priori*, and contrary to the professions

Dissenters
entrust their
cause to the
transcend-
ent talents
of Mr. Fox.

sions and declarations of the persons holding such opinions, that their doctrines would produce acts injurious to the common weal. Men ought not to be judged by their opinions, but by their actions. Speculative notions ought never to disqualify a man for executing an office, the performance of whose duties depends upon practical abilities, dispositions, and habits. The object of the test laws at first had been to exclude anti-monarchical men from civil offices; but such conduct proceeded upon false pretences, it tended to hypocrisy, and served as a restraint on the good and conscientious only. Instead of a formal and direct oath of allegiance, they resorted, by means of a religious test, to an indirect political standard. The danger of the church arose only from the supine negligence of the clergy, and the superior activity and zeal of the dissenters, in discharging the duties of their sacred functions. History exhibited the dissenters supporting the principles of the British constitution, while the high church promoted arbitrary power. When this country had been distracted with internal troubles and insurrections, the dissenters had with their lives and properties stood forward in its defence. Their exertions had powerfully contributed to defeat the rebellions in 1715 and 1745, to maintain the constitution, and establish the Brunswick family on the throne: in those times every high churchman was a Jacobite, and as inimical to the family of Hanover, as the dissenters were earnest in their support. An attempt had recently been made, with too great success, to raise a high-church party: the discipline of the church, and the abstract duties which she

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and answer
to objec-
tions.

prescribed, he admired and revered, as she avoided all that was superstitious, and retained all that was essential: he therefore declared himself her warm friend. Individual members of the body he esteemed for their talents, learning, and conduct; but as a political party, the church never acted but for mischief. Objections had been raised for the repeal, from the French revolution; but this great event was totally irrelevant, as an argument against the claims of the dissenters: it had, indeed, a contrary tendency; the French church was now paying the penalty of former intolerance. Though far from approving of the summary and indiscriminate forfeiture of church property, in that country, he could not but see that its cause was ecclesiastical oppression. This should operate as a warning to the church of England; persecution may prevail for a time, but ultimately terminates in the punishment of its abettors. He was aware that the cause which he had undertaken, was not at present popular; some of those whom he most highly valued differed with him upon this subject. So far was he individually from having any connection with the dissenters, that in them he had experienced the most violent political adversaries; but regarding their cause as the cause of truth and liberty, he should give it his warmest support both on the present and every future occasion. He concluded with proposing a more specific motion for the revision of the test act, than any which was formerly made.

Mr. Pitt
continues
to treat ad-
missibility

Mr. Pitt, after arguing that eligibility to offices in any community, was a question not of right but expediency,

1790.
to offices
as a mere
question of
expediency.

and deems
the leaders
of the dis-
senters ini-
mical to our
establish-
ment.

expediency, considered the test act upon that ground. Presuming the utility of the ecclesiastical establishment to be generally granted, he enquired whether the principles of the dissenters did not aspire at the subversion of the church, and whether their conduct did not manifest an intention of carrying these principles into practice. Mr. Fox had proposed to judge men, not by their opinions, but by their actions. This was certainly the ground for procedure in judicial cases; but in deliberative, the policy of prevention was often not only wise but necessary; opinions produced actions, therefore provident lawgivers and statesmen must often investigate opinions, in order to infer probable conduct. Leading dissenters, from their principles inimical to the church, had indicated intentions immediately hostile; and favourite arguments in their works were the uselessness of an establishment, and the probability that by vigour and unanimity it might be overthrown. Against such avowed designs, it became all those who desired the preservation of the church, firmly to guard. Admissibility into offices of great trust would obviously increase the power of the dissenters: the assertions of their advocates, that their theological opinions had no influence on their political conduct, were most effectually confuted by their own declarations. At a general meeting they had subscribed resolutions recommending to voters to support, at the election, such members only as favoured the repeal. Thus while they themselves reprobated a religious test established by the constituted authorities of the kingdom, they wished to enforce a political test by their own

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sole authority. Perceiving their general principles practically operating in conduct hostile to the church, he should vote against a repeal, which in the present circumstances he deemed injurious to our establishment.

The arguments
against the
application.

Great majority
against the
the repeal.

Mr. Flood
proposes a
reform in
parliament;

Mr. Burke, from various details and documents, endeavoured to prove, that the dissenters anxiously desired, and confidently expected, the abolition of tithes and the liturgy; and that they were bent on the subversion of the church *. The arguments recently and now employed in the writings and speeches of the friends of the church, the conduct of the dissenters, and the downfall of the French hierarchy, placed in the most striking light by Mr. Burke, added powerfully to the effect of Mr. Pitt's reasoning, and made a deep impression on members of parliament. In a meeting consisting of about four hundred, there was a majority of near three to one against the projected repeal.

The spirit of change extended itself to our political constitution; two days after the rejection of Mr. Fox's motion, Mr. Flood proposed a reform in the representation of the people in parliament. This proposition, like the reasoning for the eligibility of dissenters, was grounded upon abstract theories concerning the rights of men. In a speech replete with metaphysical subtlety, he endeavoured to prove, that in the popular branch of our government, the constituent body was inadequate to the purpose of

* To establish these positions, he quoted passages from the resolutions at the public meetings; their catechisms; the writings of Doctors Price and Priestley, and other supporters of the cause.

elections.

elections. Electoral franchises ought to be formed on principles both of property and number. Electors should be numerous, because numbers are necessary to the spirit of liberty ; possessed of property, because property is conducive to the spirit of order, Pursuing these principles through various theoretical niceties, and applying them to the actual state of representation, he endeavoured to evince the necessity of a reform, which should extend electoral franchise to every householder. In answer to this theory, Mr. Windham argued from plain fact and experience, Mr. Flood had proved by an arithmetical statement, what no one denied, that the representation was unequal, but he had not proved from political history and reasoning, that it was inadequate. Statesmen and lawgivers should argue from experience, and not from visionary theories ; we had no *data* to ascertain the operation of such fanciful projects. Our representation as it stood, answered its purpose, as appeared in the welfare of the people, and the prosperity of the country. According to the present system, it was evident that the influence of the people was very extensive and powerful. It was their voice that sanctioning, permitted the most important acts of the executorial government ; the commencement and continuance of war ; the conclusion of peace, and the appointment of ministers were most frequently dictated by the people. Their weight was fully as great as expediency, their own security, and happiness admitted. Besides were parliamentary reform generally desirable, the present æra of speculation, change, and ferment, was totally unfit for the purpose. Messrs. Burke, Pitt, and others

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his subtle
theory

is contro-
verted by
Mr. Wind-
ham.

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He with-
draws his
motion.

Petitions
from dealers
in tobacco,
praying to
repeal the
law subject-
ing them to
the excise.
A motion
to that ef-
fect by Mr.
Sheridan

others maintaining the same ground, and a great majority appearing inimical to Mr. Flood's plan, he withdrew his motion. These were the only great political questions which engaged the House of Commons that season; and there they rested without extending to the Peers.

Subjects of revenue occupied the chief attention of parliament, during the remainder of the session. Dealers in tobacco presented a great number of petitions, praying for the repeal of the act, which subjected that commodity to the excise. Mr. Sheridan took the lead in this subject, and, having in a splendid speech directed his eloquence against the whole system of excise laws, by the fertility of his genius, in his illustrations, he gave an appearance of novelty to so very trite a subject. He came at last to the peculiar hardships of the tobacco bill, enforced the objections made the preceding year, and proposed a resolution, that the survey of the excise is inapplicable to the manufactory of tobacco. It was contended by ministers, that the arguments against this application of excise, rested on the testimony of dealers, who had derived a great profit from fraudulent traffic, of which they were now deprived by the new mode of collection. It could be no just argument against a plan for the prevention of illicit trade, that it was not sanctioned by the approbation of contraband dealers. Was it unfair or illiberal to doubt the veracity and honour of a smuggler, when he gives testimony concerning his forbidden articles. The extent of former frauds was obvious in the productiveness of the late preventive means. Since its subjection to the excise, the revenue from tobacco had

had increased upwards of three hundred thousand pounds a-year*. For these reasons, Mr. Sheridan's motion was negatived by a majority of a hundred and ninety-one to a hundred and forty-seven.

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is negatived.

In the month of April, Mr. Pitt opened his scheme of finance for the year; having in general stated the prosperous situation of the country, to prove and illustrate his position, he recapitulated the extraordinary expences, defrayed in 1789, in addition to the regular establishment. Notwithstanding these unforeseen demands, though we had borrowed only one million, we had paid six millions of debt. The increase of revenue, which had thus liquidated so many and great charges, originated in two permanent causes, the suppression of smuggling, and the increase of commerce†. Our navigation

Financial
statements.

* From the statement of the tobacco-nists, it appeared, that the manufacturers were about four hundred in number; eight millions of pounds were annually smuggled. The revenue of which amounted to four hundred thousand pounds sterling; this sum purloining from the public they divided among themselves, so that each manufacturer on an average gained a thousand a year, by cheating the public.

† The exports for the year 1789, as valued by the Custom-house entries, amounted to no less a sum than £18,513,000 of which the British manufactured goods exported, amounted to £13,490,000 Upon an average of the exports six years prior to the American war, which average he took on account of those years being the period in which our commerce flourished most, it appeared, that the British manufactured goods exported, amounted to no more than £10,343,000 The imports for that year, amounted to a higher sum than was ever before known, being valued at £17,828,000 This increase of import, which might at first appear disadvantageous, as it might seem to lessen the balance of trade in favour of the country, Mr. Pitt, having traced

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Prosperity
of the
country.Mr. Dundas presents
an account
of our East
India pos-
sessions.

tion* had increased in proportion to our commerce.

This prosperity arose from the industry and enterprise, and capital, which are formed and protected under the British constitution. A system productive of so momentous benefits, it was our most sacred duty to defend against all innovations. Mr. Sheridan endeavoured, as in the preceding year, to controvert the minister's calculations, and through the same means, by including in a general average, the year 1786, that had been unproductive from causes peculiar to itself. The supplies for the army, navy, and ordnance, were nearly the same as in the former year: no new taxes were imposed; but there was a lottery as usual.

Mr. Dundas about the same time, presented an account of the financial state of India. The result of his statement was, that the revenue considerably exceeded the product of the former year †; and that the

traced to its real source, shewed to arise from circumstances demonstrating the wealth and prosperity of the nation. It issued in remitted property from the East and West Indies, from the increased products of Ireland, shewing the growing prosperity of the sister kingdom, from the Greenland and South Wales fisheries, being wealth poured in from the ocean.

* In the year 1773, there belonged to British ports, 9,224 vessels, and 63,000 seamen; and in the year 1785, 11,085 vessels, and 83,000 seamen, shewing an increase of seamen in 1788, above the number in 1773, of no less than one third.

† The revenues of Bengal amounted to - £5,619,999
— of Madras - - - 1,213,229
— of Bombay - - - 138,228

Charges of Bengal	£3,183,250	£6,371,451
of Madras	1,302,037	
of Bombay	568,710	5,053,997
	<u>£5,053,997</u>	<u>£1,297,454</u>

To

the increase though, in some particulars, owing to temporary circumstances, was chiefly the effect of permanent causes. The system of justice and moderation adopted from the time that the territorial possessions were subjected to the controul of the British government, had produced the most beneficial consequences both to the natives and to this country. The landed revenues being much more willingly paid, were much more easily collected. The friendly intercourse between the Hindoos and the British, had suggested various improvements in the collection. Fostered by a humane and equitable administration, the internal commerce of our India settlements had greatly increased. Observing rigid faith with the Indian natives, we had to encounter no formidable confederacies, which should at once diminish territorial improvement, and cause enormous expences. Prosperity arising from a general scheme of policy at once wise and liberal, must increase with accelerated rapidity. In a few years the Company would be enabled to pay off their arrears*: British India would be more flourishing in wealth, in commerce, manufactures, and in every enjoyment, than any other part of the whole continent of Hindostan. In the present state of our

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To this amount of the net revenue was to be added £230,361 for exports; and the sum of £65,000 charges for Bencoolen and the Prince of Wales's island; leaving on the whole, a net sum of £2,147,815 applicable to the discharge of debts, and the purchase of investments.

* The debts of the company for the last year were £7,604,754 those of the present year £6,501,385 giving a decrease of £1,103,369.

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power, we certainly had no danger to apprehend from any European nation. Holland was in alliance with us, and the French were not in a situation to disturb British India. We had still one enemy in the country, but without European auxiliaries, unsupported by the other native powers, Tippoo Saib could not be formidable to the British force. Mr. Francis endeavoured to controvert Mr. Dundas's allegations respecting both the territorial and commercial situation of affairs, and rested his objections chiefly upon extracts from letters. These Mr. Dundas insisted, being garbled, were partial and incomplete evidence; and resolutions formed on Mr. Dundas's statement, were proposed and adopted. The house voted several sums as a recompence for service, and an indemnification for losses sustained in the cause of the public. On a message from his majesty, parliament bestowed an annuity of a thousand pounds for twenty years, on Dr. Willis, who, under providence, had been so instrumental in restoring to the country so valuable a blessing*. The salary of the speaker was augmented from three thousand to six thousand a year. In a committee upon American claims, Mr. Pitt represented to the house the losses sustained by the family of Penn; their case was different from that of any of the other American loyalists, and therefore could not be governed by the rules which the house had established respecting the generality of cases. He proposed to grant to them and their heirs four thousand per annum out of the consolidated fund. Mr. Wilberforce moved for the consideration of the slave-trade; most of the time allotted to that subject was

* See vol. 4. chap. 41.

occupied in hearing evidence, and no bill was introduced during this session.

The trial of Mr. Hastings made but little progress during the present session. The court sat but thirteen days, in which the managers of the house of commons went through the charge relative to the receipt of presents, which was opened by Mr. Anstruther, and summed up by Mr. Fox, in a speech which lasted two days. Mr. Burke detailed the circumstances which retarded the trial: the appointed mode of procedure had increased the difficulties and delays; the managers had proposed in the written evidence, to confine recital of letters and papers to such extracts as related to the charges; but the counsel for Mr. Hastings insisted on reading the whole of such documents, though many of them were extremely long; and the Lords had agreed that no partial quotation from any paper could be received as evidence; that either the whole contents, or no part should be adduced; and the resolution evidently tending to promote impartial and complete enquiry, Mr. Burke complained of as an obstacle to the prosecution. It was however, he contended, the duty of the house of commons, and their managers, to persevere in the trial, without regarding any hindrances which might occur. He moved two resolutions to that effect, and the motions were both carried. Mr. Hastings continued to have a most zealous and ardent advocate in Major Scott, who very frequently employed not only his tongue but his pen in the cause. Scott had indeed a great propensity to literary exhibitions; and sundry letters to editors of newspapers, and several

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Libels
against the
commons
on account
of Hastings'
trial.

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several pamphlets, manifested his zeal as a pleader, and his fruitfulness as an author. Among his other effusions was a letter subscribed with his own name, in a newspaper called the *Diary*; this essay contained many injurious assertions against the managers, and also blamed the house of commons for supporting the impeachment. On the 17th of May, General Burgoyne complained of the letter as a gross libel. Major Scott avowed himself the author; but declared that he meant no offence to the house. If he had been guilty of an error, he had been misled by great examples; Messrs. Burke and Sheridan had published *stronger** libels than ever he had written. After offering this defence, Scott withdrew from the house; several motions of censure were made, and various modifications were offered: Mr. Burke was very urgent that an exemplary punishment should be inflicted; the conduct of Mr. Scott, he averred, had been extremely reprehensible: from the commencement of the prosecution he promoted libels against the managers, and their constituents†. After a long consideration it was agreed, that the letter should be voted a gross libel, and that the author should be censured in his place.

* If either of these gentlemen published libels, few will controvert the Major's opinion, that they must be *stronger* than any which he wrote.

† Mr. Burke said, he was well assured, that not less than twenty thousand pounds had been expended in libels supporting Mr. Hastings; that Major Scott was his agent in all these cases, and the common libeller of the house.

While

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1790
Dispute
with Spain
about Noot-
ka Sound.

While the nation flourished in the enjoyment of peace, an alarm arose that so beneficial a tranquillity would be speedily interrupted. On the 5th of May Mr. Pitt delivered a message from his majesty to the commons, and the Duke of Leeds to the peers; intimating an apprehension that the peace, during which Britain had so greatly prospered, might be broken. The following were the circumstances in which the message originated. During the last voyage of the celebrated Cook, the Resolution and Discovery having touched at Nootka (or Prince William's) Sound, the crews purchased a considerable number of valuable furs, which they afterwards disposed of to very great advantage in China; and Captain King, who published the last volume of Cook's voyages, recommended the traffic with those northern coasts, as very lucrative. In consequence of this advice, some mercantile adventurers settled in the East Indies, and having consulted Sir John Macpherson the governor general, with his consent they undertook to supply the Chinese with furs from those regions, and also ginseng, an article that was likewise plentiful: for this purpose they fitted out two small vessels. The trade proved so advantageous, that in the year 1788 the adventurers determined to form a permanent settlement. With this view Mr. Mearns, the gentleman principally concerned, purchased ground from the natives,

The situation of the grounds of the ~~Empire~~ is comprehended
for the memorial of Lieutenant Mearns, presented to Mr.
Secretary Grenville, which see in State papers, 1790.

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1798.

Ink
offered by
Spain.

and built a house which he secured and fortified, as a repository for his merchandize. The following year the settlement was enlarged; more land was bought from the country proprietors, and about seventy Chinese, with several artificers, constituted the establishment. In the month of May, two Spanish ships of war arrived in the Sound; for some days they made no hostile attempt, but on the fourteenth, one of the captains seized an English vessel, conveyed the officers and men on board the Spanish ships, and afterwards sent them prisoners to a Spanish port. He also took possession of the lands and buildings belonging to the new factory, removed the British flag, and declared that all the lands between Cape Horn, and the sixtieth degree of north latitude, on the western coast of America, were the undoubted property of the Spanish king. Another vessel was captured afterwards under the same pretence; the crews of both were thrown into prison, and the cargoes were sold for the captors, without the form either of condemnation or judicature. The Spanish ambassador first informed the court of London that the ships had been seized; and at the same time expressed his master's desire, that means might be taken for preventing his Britannic majesty's subjects from frequenting those coasts, which he alleged to have been previously occupied by the subjects of the Catholic king. He also complained of the fisheries carried on by the British subjects in the seas adjoining to the Spanish continent, as being contrary to the rights of the crown of Spain. His Britannic majesty immediately demanded adequate satisfaction to the individuals

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~~Spain~~
Satisfaction
demanded.
Conduct of
Spain.

individuals injured, and to the British nation for the insult which had been offered. The viceroy of Mexico had restored one of the vessels*, but had not thereby satisfied the nation; on the contrary, the court of Spain professed to give up the ships as a favour, not as a right, and asserted a direct claim to exclusive sovereignty, navigation, and commerce, in the territories, coasts, and seas in that part of the world. His majesty, far from admitting this allegation, made a fresh demand for satisfaction, and having also received intelligence that considerable armaments were equipping in the ports of Spain, he judged it necessary to prepare on his side for acting with vigor and effect, in supporting the rights and interests of Britain. The message from the king stated the injury and insult, the satisfaction demanded, the reply, the second demand, the subsequent conduct of Spain, and the measures of Britain arising from that conduct: it farther recommended to his faithful commons, to enable him to make such augmentations to his forces as might be eventually necessary. His majesty earnestly wished that the wisdom and equity of the Catholic king might render the satisfaction which was unquestionably due, and that this affair might so terminate as to prevent future misunderstanding, continue and confirm harmony and friendship between the two nations,

The king's
message to
parliament.

* The ship and crew (they said) had been released by the viceroy of Mexico, on the supposition, as he declared, that nothing but agreement of the rights of Spain could have induced the merchants in question to attempt any establishment on that coast.

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which his majesty would ever endeavour to maintain and improve by all means consistent with the dignity of the crown, and essential interests of his subjects*.

The message being taken into consideration, Mr. Pitt declared, whatever the House must feel on the subject of his majesty's communication, he was too well assured of the public spirit of every member, to conceive that any difference of opinion could arise as to the measures which such circumstances would make it necessary to adopt. From the facts stated in the message, it appeared that British subjects had been forcibly interrupted in a traffic which they had carried on for years without molestation, in parts of America where they had an incontrovertible right of trading, and in places to which no country could claim an exclusive right of commerce and navigation. Ships had been seized, restitution and satisfaction demanded, but without effect: the court of Madrid had advanced a claim to the exclusive rights of navigation in those seas, that was unfounded, exorbitant, and indefinite: in its consequences aiming destruction at our valuable fisheries in the southern ocean, and tending to the annihilation of a commerce, which we were just beginning to carry on to the profit of the country, in hitherto unfrequented parts of the globe; it was therefore necessary and incumbent upon the nation, to adopt measures which might in future prevent any such disputes. Much as we wished for peace, we must be prepared

* See State Papers, May 25, 1790.

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1795.

for war, if Spain continued to refuse satisfaction for the aggression, and to assert claims totally inconsistent with the rights of independent navigators, to lands which being before unappropriated, they should make their own by occupancy and labour. He therefore moved an address conformable to the message.

On a subject which involved both the interest and honour of the country, there was but one sentiment in both houses of parliament. No British senator could bear without indignant resentment, such an imperious assumption by any foreign power; and in the commons, the first to declare his cordial support was Mr. Fox; he however blamed the minister for having so very lately afforded such a flattering prospect of the continuance of peace, when before that time he had known from the Spanish ambassador, the principal grounds of his majesty's message. It was replied, that this animadversion was founded on a misapprehension of fact; at the period mentioned, government did not know the extent of the Spanish claims, nor the preparations that were carried on in the Spanish ports. An unanimous address was presented by parliament, assuring his majesty of their determination to afford him the most zealous and effectual support for maintaining the dignity of his crown, and the essential interests of his dominions*. This address was soon followed by a vote of credit of a million, for the purpose of carrying into effect the warlike preparations that might be necessary. Motions were

Parliament unanimously pledge their support of the king in vindicating the rights of Britain.

* See State Papers, May 26, 1795.

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afterwards made in both houses, for papers that might illustrate the grounds of the dispute, but they were resisted upon an established rule, founded in wise policy, and sanctioned by uniform precedent, that no papers relating to a negotiation with a foreign power should be produced while such negotiation is pending.

On the 10th of June, his majesty closed the session with a speech, in which he acquainted the two houses that he had yet received no satisfactory answer from Madrid, and was therefore under the necessity of continuing to proceed with expedition and vigour in preparations for war, in the prosecution of which he had received the strongest assurances from his allies, of their determination to fulfil the engagements of the existing treaties. His majesty announced his intention of immediately dissolving the present parliament; and in signifying this determination, he thanked them for the proofs they had given of affectionate and unshaken loyalty to his person, their uniform and zealous regard for the true principles of our invaluable constitution, and their unremitting attention to the happiness and prosperity of the country. In a very concise, but comprehensive and strong summary, his majesty exhibited the effects of their exertions. "The rapid increase (he said) of our manufactures, commerce, and navigation, the additional protection and security afforded to the distant possessions of the empire, the provisions for the good government of India, the improvement of the public revenue, and the establishment of a permanent system for the gradual reduction of the national debt, have furnished

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1790.

furnished the best proofs of your resolution in encountering the difficulties with which you had to contend, and of your steadiness and perseverance in those measures which were best adapted to promote the essential and lasting interests of my dominions." His majesty farther emphatically added, "The loyalty and public spirit, the industry and enterprize of my subjects, have seconded your exertions. On their sense of the advantages which they at present experience, as well as on their uniform and affectionate attachment to my person and government, I rely for the continuance of that harmony and confidence, the happy effects of which have so manifestly appeared during the present parliament, and which must at all times afford the surest means of meeting the exigencies of war, or of cultivating with increasing benefit the blessings of peace." The parliament was dissolved the following day by proclamation.

Dissolution
of parliament.

Warlike
preparations.

The preparations for maintaining our rights against aggression were carried on with vigor and expedition, proportioned to the resources of so potent a nation. But it being the intention of the British government to avoid hostilities, unless absolutely necessary for the national honour and security, Mr. Fitzherbert was sent to Madrid with full powers to settle the disputes between the Spanish and British nations, in a decisive manner. The grounds of the Spanish claims were set forth in a declaration to all the European courts, dated the 4th of June, 1790*, and more specifically detailed in a memorial delivered

Diplomatic
discussion
between
Britain and
Spain.

* State Papers, 1790.

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the 1st of June to Mr. Fitzherbert, the British ambassador*. According to these statements, Spain had a prescriptive right to the exclusive navigation, commerce, and property of Spanish America and the Spanish West Indies. The various treaties with England had recognized that right: in the treaty of Utrecht, which was still in force, Spain and England had agreed, that the navigation and commerce of the West Indies, under the dominion of Spain, should remain in the precise situation in which they stood in the reign of his catholic majesty Charles II. It was stipulated that Spain should never grant to any nation permission to trade with her American dominions, nor cede to any other power any part of these territories†. These rights extended to Nootka Sound; and though Spain had not planted colonies in every part of these dominions, still they were within the line of demarkation that had been always admitted. On the part of England it was answered‡, that though the treaty of Utrecht, and subsequent conventions, recognized the rights of Spain to her dominions in America, and in the West Indies, to be on the same footing as in the reign of Charles II. and we were still willing to adhere to that recognition, the admission by no means proved that Nootka Sound made part of those territories. By the plainest maxims of jurisprudence, whatever is com-

* State Papers, 1790.

† The object of this stipulation was, to exclude France, which was become so closely connected with Spain, from any share in her American trade or possessions.

‡ State Papers, 1790; Mr. Fitzherbert's answer to the Spanish memorial.

most belongs to the first occupiers; but the right to extensive wild occupancy is by occupancy determined. Every individual, like every individual, has a right to appropriate whatever they can acquire without trespassing on the previous appropriations of others. The English had a right to possess as much of the desert coast of America as they could occupy or cultivate. The Spaniards not having established their claim by either occupancy or labour, proved no right to the exclusive property of Nootka Sound. The seizure, therefore, of the British vessels and British effects, was an injury and an insult for which Britain demanded restitution and satisfaction. The language of British justice, demanding what British power could so easily enforce from any aggressor that dared to provoke its vengeance, was represented by Spain as haughty and menacing; and various difficulties occurred before matters were brought to a decision. The Spaniards professed a desire of conciliation, but were really endeavouring to interest the French government in their behalf; and the royal family of France was sufficiently disposed to support the Bourbon compact; but the king had now lost the power of giving effect to this agreement. The national assembly decreed an armament of fourteen ships of the line, but avowedly to protect their own commerce and colonies, and to embrace no measures that were not purely defensive; and this resolution highly gratified the people, who were not then disposed to go to war with England. Though the preparations of Spain were vigorous as far as her power and resources admitted, yet her fleets

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Spain attempts to interest France.

The French nation is adverse to war with England.

C H A P.

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1790.

Spain,
helpless of
aid, yields
to the
demands of
Britain.

The dif-
putes are
adjusted in
a conven-
tion.

fleets consisting of seventy ships of the line, by such sailors as she could collect, was lit to cope with the navy of England, amounting to one hundred and fifty-eight ships of the line manned by British seamen. Finding no prospect of effectual assistance from France, and conscious of her own inability to contend with England, Spain began to mingle professions of concession with her former declarations of pacific intention. Mr. Fitzherbert having persisted in his demands, and not relaxing the claims, the Spanish court, on the 1st of July, issued a declaration testifying their willingness to comply fully with the demands of his Britannic majesty, by rendering satisfaction and compensation. In order to mitigate to the people of Spain the bitterness of a just concession, extorted by fear, the declaration* set forth that his Catholic majesty was fully persuaded the king of Britain would act to him in the same manner, under similar circumstances. Mr. Fitzherbert having accepted the declaration, all differences between the Court of Madrid and London were terminated with great formality and precision, by a convention† between his Britannic majesty and the king of Spain, signed at the Escorial, on the 28th of October, 1790. The prohibition of trade to all the north-west coasts of America was confirmed to England. Both nations were equally restricted from attempting any settlement near Cape Horn than the most southerly plantations.

* State Papers July 24, 1790.

† State Papers, October 28, 1790.

already established by Spain. It was agreed, that should any ground of complaint thereafter arise, no violence should be committed, but the case should be reported to the respective courts, who would bring it to an amicable termination.

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The declaration of the 24th of July having been received in England, and the result communicated by the Duke of Leeds, secretary of state, to the lord mayor, and published in the Gazette extraordinary, afforded great pleasure to the nation; but the convention completed the satisfaction of the people, who deemed it equally honourable and advantageous to Britain; as the minister without involving the country in a war, had obtained every compensation which justice could demand; and had shewn to other powers, that
BRITISH SUBJECTS WERE NOT TO BE MOLESTED
WITH IMPUNITY.

HISTORY OF THE

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Continental affairs.—Measures of Britain and her allies for counteracting the ambition of Joseph and Catherine.—Poland friendly to the defensive alliance.—Death of Joseph II. emperor of Germany; and character.—Leopold his successor moderate and pacific.—He agrees to open a congress at Reichenbach.—Military operations between the Austrians and Turks; bloody but indecisive.—Habitual prepossessions of Kaunitz and Hertzberg.—Liberal and wise policy of Britain, and ability of Ewart.—Peace between Austria and Turkey, under the guarantee of the defensive alliance.—Operations between Russia and Turkey.—Siege of Ismail.—Desperately valiant defence.—Stormed.—Cruel and dreadful slaughter.—Campaign between Sweden and Prussia.—Peace between Russia and Sweden.—State of affairs in the Netherlands.—Rise of a democratical spirit.—Its votaries propose to subvert the constituted authorities.—Contests between the aristocratical and democratical revolutionists.—Leopold proposes to avail himself of their dissensions.—He offers to redress their real grievances, but vindicates his right to the sovereignty.—Britain and her allies mediate between the Flemings and Leopold.—Under their guarantee the Netherlands are restored to their ancient privileges.—They obtain further concessions from Leopold.—They find their security in their ancient mixed government.—Proceedings of the French revolutionists in forming the new constitution.—Qualification of active citizens.—preclude universal suffrage.—Division into departments.—New and comprehensive principle of financial legislation.—Confiscation of clerical property.—Civic oath.—Scheme for converting the spoils of the clergy into ready money.—Boundless power of the mob.—The multitude, civil and military

military assistance of religion.—Mixture of ridicule and serious inquiry.—Anarchus Cloota, ambassador from the whole human race.—Abolition of titles and hereditary nobility.—Summary of changes within the year.—Anniversary celebration of the 14th of July in the Field of Mars.—Federal oath.—Violent proceedings against those who refused it.—Britain.—The French revolution is better understood.—Mr. Pitt and his friends forbear discussion of its merits.—Majority of literary men favour the new system though they censure its excesses.—Sentiments of Mr. Fox.—The clergy are alarmed by the infidelity and confiscation of the revolutionary system.—Burke's work on the subject—effects.—General election.

WHILE Britain was thus successfully employed in securing the blessings of peace to herself, she was desirous of also extending them to others. The grand scheme of confederacy which was formed by Kaunitz for uniting the great continental powers, had been discomfited by the co-operating talents of William Pitt the English minister, and Frederic the Prussian king. The alliance having since been renewed between the two empires, and endangering the balance of power, had stimulated the son of Pitt, and Frederic's counsellors, to form a new plan of defensive confederation, to counteract the ambitious designs of Russia and Austria *. Their project was so extended as to embrace all those states which were likely to be affected by the imperial aggressors. Poland, Sweden, and Turkey, were equally interested in forming a part of this confederacy. Mr. Ewart, British ambassador at Berlin, a man of great

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Measures of
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counteract-
ing the am-
bition of
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* Segur's History of Frederic William, vol. ii. p. 136.

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abilities, and extensive political knowledge, having attained very considerable influence with the Prussian court, employed it in promoting the purposes of the defensive alliance. This minister, viewing the situation and productiveness of Poland, saw that it might be rendered the source of immense political benefit to the confederacy, and might ultimately produce important commercial advantages to Great Britain. Poland might be rendered a formidable barrier to the designs of Russia; and the acquisitions which Prussia might obtain by another dismemberment of Poland, would not contribute so essentially to her security as the independence of the Polish monarchy; it was, therefore, the interest of Prussia to support and strengthen that neighbour*. The Poles themselves were made sensible that it would be mutually beneficial to Prussia and their country to be closely connected. Having long nourished the most indignant resentment against the Russians, their rage was recently inflamed by the insolence of the imperial confederates, who, without asking their consent, had stationed large bodies of troops in their territories, and even urged them to enter into an alliance against Turkey, a power which had been always friendly to Poland; induced by these considerations, they readily acceded to the defensive union, and made vigorous preparations. This confederacy, when joined to the belligerent opposers of the two empires, constituted a sextuple † alliance, comprehending Great Britain, Prussia, Holland, Sweden,

Poland
friendly to
the defens-
ive alliance

* Ovidge's Annual Register 1791.—Sagar, vol. ii. passim.

† Ovidge's Annual Register 1791, chap. i.

Poland,

Poland, and Turkey. Its first and principal object was to save the Ottoman empire from the grasp of the imperial confederates; and to afford to the contracting parties reciprocal protection from the boundless ambition of the combined aggressors. Not only to liberate Poland from its subjection to Catharine, but to draw to the English ports the numerous productions, naval and commercial, of that extensive and fertile country, formed a secondary, but essential, object of British policy. As negotiation was the first purpose of the powers which were not actually engaged, they made overtures for a congress, which, though rejected by Russia, they, from a recent change in the sovereignty of Austria, expected to meet with a more favourable reception from that power.

Joseph II. emperor of Germany, whose life had been chiefly distinguished for extent and variety of project terminating in disappointment, had long laboured under bodily dis temper; if not caused in its origin, increased in its operation, and accelerated in its effects, by the distresses of a mind impatient of crosses encountered from its own injustice, precipitancy, and folly. The gleam of success from Turkey was soon forgotten in the gloomy prospect which opened from the Netherlands. The unbounded spirit of reform had produced subversion; the attempt to govern without controul had, in the most valuable part of his dominions, left him no subjects to command. In Hungary also, his innovations generated discontent, discontent demands of redress; demands of redress were first haughtily refused, but at length extorted concession. Indeed, his impetuous spirit, against himself, and his ambition weakened

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Death of
Joseph II.
emperor of
Germany.

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weakened as he approached that period when earthly power and glory could no longer avail. In his last illness, he sought consolation in that religion which for so great a part of his life he had disregarded, and learned on his death-bed, how absurd and pernicious the attempt was to suppress in his subjects that principle which only could restrain turbulent passion, and heal a wounded breast. In the languor of illness, and the awful hour of dissolution, he saw that his policy had been as unwise as unjust; and that disgrace and disaster awaits the prince who attempts to enslave a free and gallant people. Being now weaned from the ambition which had so much agitated his life, he acquired tranquillity, and preserved it to the last. On the 20th of February he expired, in the forty-ninth year of his age, the twenty-fifth of his imperial reign as the successor of his father, and the ninth of his sovereignty over the Austrian dominions as the heir of his mother.

and character.

Joseph II. was by nature ardent in spirit, active in disposition, and fond of distinction. His situation cherished in such a mind the love of power which he had so much the means of gratifying. With lively feeling, but without strength of understanding and originality of genius, in his objects and undertakings he was the creature of imitation. From the splendor of Frederic's character, his illustrious exploits, and his immense improvement of his dominions, as well as the vicinity of their situation, and personal and political intercourse, he chose for a model the Prussian king, without discrimination to understand the peculiar features of his supposed archetype; acuteness to discern the principles and subjects of a monarch's

narch's conduct, or compass of mind to comprehend the general system of his measures and actions. He also was an admiring imitator of Catharine, and supposed himself the confident of her counsels when he was only the tool of her schemes. From both he copied infidelity *, but did not copy from them that prudent policy which cherished religion in their subjects, adapted themselves in appearance to the popular prepossessions, and made their respective churches engines of state. He imitated their ambitious projects without possessing the wisdom of plan, or the consistent and well-directed vigour of execution, which accomplished their designs. Springing from a variety of causes, and encouraged to a certain extent by these sovereigns, there prevailed in Europe a great disposition to reform. Frederic clearly apprehending what was right or wrong, innovated wherever change was improvement. Joseph was a reformist because innovation was the favourite pursuit of the times; and on the same principles, by which private votaries of some favourite fashion are often actuated, sought distinction by being a leader of the reigning mode, without considering how far it was wise, prudent, or suited to the circumstances in which he was placed. His pursuit of reform being neither accommodated to the habits nor to the sentiments of its objects, was the primary end of his conduct; and from the violence of his temper, and the total want of moderation, the principal source of his manifold disasters. In his wars, as well as his internal politics, Joseph was a factitious and imitative character.

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* See Abbé Barruel, vol. i.

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Without military talents or inclinations, without well-founded prospects of advantage, he appears to have sought hostilities from the desire of rivalling his warlike neighbours. Joseph's misfortunes arose entirely from his incapacity of directing himself, and from not being counselled by able and upright men. Without sound judgment himself, he wanted wise and faithful advisers * to oppose projects which were evidently hurtful to the projector. Qualities apparently contrary, indecision with precipitation, obstinacy with fickleness and inconstancy, openness, and benignity of manner and countenance, with duplicity and faithlessness, arose from the same source; an understanding which judged without examination; and a will directed by temporary impulse, without any fixed principles of conduct. The character of Joseph, from his condition, was very conspicuous in its operation, and very pernicious in its effects; but instead of being, as has been often represented, *singular*, is, in its springs and constituents, **EXTREMELY COMMON**. Whoever observes, in private life, vivacity of fancy without soundness of judgment; ardour of disposition and eagerness of pursuit, without just appreciation of end, or skilful selection of means; emulation in mere fashion; multiplicity of project formed without wisdom, and carried on without constancy, beholds, in a confined scene, the same character exhibited which the world con-

* The ruling principle of Kaunitz being the elevation of the House of Austria, successful as he had been as the counsellor of the prudent Maria Theresa, yet he foothed and abetted the impetuous Joseph, in projects that eventually tended to its depression.

templated

templated on the great European theatre, performed by Joseph II. emperor of Germany.

Joseph was succeeded by his brother Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, a prince of a very different character. Accustomed to the pleasurable regions of Italy, and the enervating refinement of Italian manners, Leopold, residing at Florence, was chiefly distinguished for luxurious softness; and having no incentives to war, or opportunities of ambition, was habitually pacific, and actually indolent. Both from nature and circumstances, and perhaps also from contemplating the effects of his brother's violence, he was remarkable for moderation. When, instead of being an Italian prince, he became head of the house of Austria, he demonstrated that his apparent indolence arose from the want of motives to action, and not from an inherent inertness of character; he shewed himself firm and efficient, but retained his moderation and pacific disposition; and though he did not possess superior talents, was, by his mixed steadiness and prudence*, well qualified to remedy the evils which had proceeded from the capricious and violent Joseph. Averse himself from war as an *adventure of ambition*, he saw, in the circumstances of his affairs, and his relation to foreign powers, strong reasons for promoting his disposition to peace. He was involved in hostilities with his own subjects: at variance with the principal electors, he was in danger of being excluded from the imperial throne: the conquests on the desolated borders of Turkey, obtained at an immense ex-

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Leopold,
his successor,
for, moderate
and
pacific.

* See Otridge's Annual Registers for 1791 and 1792. Paf-
sim; also Segur, vol. ii.

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He agrees
to open a
congress at
Reichen-
bach.Military
operations
between the
Austrians
and Turks;

penance, were of little value. The supplies for carrying on the war had lost, in the Netherlands, their most productive source. A hundred thousand disciplined Prussians hovered over the frontiers of Bohemia, while three other armies were prepared to act in different quarters. England would pour her wealth, and Prussia her troops, to support the revolted Netherlands. From war Austria had little to gain, and much to lose. For these reasons Leopold was disposed to pacification, and acceded to a proposal for opening a congress at Reichenbach in Silesia. Meanwhile the campaign was opened on the frontiers of Turkey. Selim, to compensate the impolicy, and consequent losses of the former year, chose for his vizier Hassan Aly, a man of great ability. The Turks, who imputed the adverse events of the last campaign to the misconduct of the late vizier, were ready and eager to renew the contest, and a great army was prepared. The sultan spared no aid, which superstition could afford, to inspirit his troops. He clad them in black, to denote their readiness to meet death in defence of their cause; and, in concurrence with his chief priests, proclaimed a remission of their sins to all who should die in battle: these incentives, co-operating with the native valour of the Turks, early in the season he had four hundred thousand men ready to take the field. The campaign on the Danube was opened by the capture of Orsova, which having been blockaded during the whole winter by the Austrians, was suddenly reduced through the misapprehension of the garrison. The Turks conceiving a shock of an earthquake to be the explosion of

of a mine, were struck with a panic, and supposing themselves about to be blown up, immediately surrendered. A detachment of the Austrians besieged Guirgewo, but the Ottomans, refusing their wonted courage, marched to its relief. Encountering the Austrians, they fought with the most desperate valour, threw those brave and disciplined troops into confusion, and defeated them with the loss of three thousand men. Among the killed was Count Thorn the general, whose head the Turks, agreeably to the custom of those ferocious barbarians, displayed in triumph through the army. This was the last act of hostilities carried on between the Turks and the Austrians.

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3790.

bloody,
but indeci-
sive.

At Reichenback the ambition of Kaunitz, which, for forty years, had been chiefly directed to aggrandize the house of Austria, still entertained hopes of acquiring advantages from the Russian confederacy, and the prosecution of the Turkish war, and was averse to the peace. Count Hertberg, the Prussian minister, formed under Frederic, and considering every maxim of that illustrious monarch's policy as the rule of conduct, without adverting to the change of circumstances, desired to attack Austria when weak and exhausted; dispossess her of the rest of Silesia, abet the revolt in the Netherlands, and prevent the elevation of Leopold to the imperial throne. A more comprehensive and liberal policy, however, originating in the wise councils of Britain, and urged by Mr. Ewart, inculcated the necessity of sacrificing hereditary enmity to solid interest, and influenced the Prussian king. Leopold being no less disposed to conciliation, tranquillity was, without

Habitual
prepossession
of
Kaunitz
and Hert-
berg.

Liberal and
wise policy
of Britain,
and ability
of Ewart.

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Peace between Austria and Turkey, under the guarantee of the defensive alliance.

difficulty, established; and on the 27th of July a convention was concluded. The king of Hungary agreed to open a negotiation for peace, on the basis of reciprocal restitution under the umpirage of the defensive alliance *. The empress of Russia was to be invited to accede to these conditions; but if she should refuse, Leopold was to observe a perfect neutrality between the contending potentates. The king of Prussia would co-operate with the maritime powers to allay the troubles in the low countries, and restore them to the Austrian dominions, on condition that their ancient privileges and constitution were re-established. The English and Dutch ministers engaged in behalf of the respective courts, to guarantee those stipulations; and an armistice for nine months was, not long after, concluded between Leopold and the Turks, which, notwithstanding various obstacles, arising from the artifices of Catharine, terminated in a peace. The war between Russia and Turkey was this year languid in its operations, as Catharine's attention was chiefly directed to the congress in Silesia, and also to schemes of policy in various quarters: some desultory engagements took place, both by land and on the Black Sea, but without any important event. To facilitate her favourite objects of driving the Turks from Europe, and raising her grandson to the Byzantine throne, the empress persevered in a plan of detaching the Greek subjects of Turkey from their obe-

* Segur, who shews himself well acquainted with continental politics, betrays a gross ignorance of the views of Britain, when he deems this league to spring from offensive ambition. See vol. ii, chap. i.

dience.

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Operations
between
Russia and
Turkey.

dience. By her encouragement, and pecuniary assistance, a rebellion was fomented in Albania: the leader of the insurgents defeated a Turkish governor; and acquired such power and confidence as to form a regular and extensive plan for emancipating themselves from the Turkish yoke, and offering the sovereignty of Greece to the Russian prince. A memorial*, not unworthy of the descendants of ancient Greeks, stating both the object and plan, was presented to Catharine, and very graciously received; but before it could be matured, Russia had been induced, if not to relinquish, to postpone, her plan of subjugating Turkey. It was the latter end of autumn before Prince Potemkin was in motion: his tardy commencement of the campaign was not without policy and design. The Russian troops, inured to the colds of the North, were much less adapted to the summer heats even of their own southern frontiers. The Asiatic Turks, on the contrary, could easily bear the scorching season in countries so much colder than their own: as the banks of the Danube and the confines of Tartary; but even the autumnal cold of those countries they could not endure; and on the approach of winter it was their uniform practice to leave the army, and return to warmer latitudes. Potemkin, knowing the number and valour of those troops, deferred his military operations until they had taken their departure. His plan was, first to reduce Hissali, then Braicklow, which would complete the Russian

* The reader will find a translation of this ingenious and eloquent performance in Ottridge's Annual Register for 1791, page 278.

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Siege of
Ismail.

conquest to the Danube ; passing that river, to place himself between the Turkish army and Constantinople ; and thus compel the vizier either to risk an engagement, or to accept of a peace on terms prescribed by Russia. Abandoned by the Asiatics, the Turkish army did not exceed forty thousand men. Dissensions and conspiracies prevailed in Constantinople, and the affairs of the Turks were in the most critical and dangerous state ; but the Divan, unbroken by these distressing circumstances, had resolved to maintain the Ottoman independence to the last extremity ; and for the accomplishment of his purpose, Selim trusting not only to the resources which still remained, but to the vigorous mediation of the defensive alliance, cherished and supported the firmness of his council. The town of ~~Ismail~~ ^{Ismail} had always been deemed the key of the lower Danube : it was surrounded by two walls, covered by their respective ditches, of considerable depth and breadth, and capable of being filled with the waters of the Danube. A select and numerous garrison had been early appointed, with an artillery amounting to more than three hundred pieces, and lately reinforced by thirty thousand men. The Russian forces on the Danube were formed into three divisions ; one commanded by Prince Potemkin, a second by Prince Repnin, the third by General Suwaroff. To this last body, covered and supported by the two others, the siege of Ismail was entrusted. Suwaroff surrounded the place with batteries constructed on every spot of ground which would answer the purpose ; and these were loaded with forges for heating the balls, with the heaviest battering artillery

lery and mortar and every other engine of destruction hitherto invented. On the 22d of December the besiegers made a general assault in eight columns: the Turks received them with intrepid valour. Five times were the Russians repulsed: five times they renewed the attack; and at the last onset were discomfited with a slaughter which seemed to render all farther effort hopeless. The besiegers now began to think of nothing but to sell their lives as dearly as possible, when Suwaroff, having dismounted his cavalry to supply the slain infantry, snatched a standard, and running up a scaling ladder, planted it with his own hand on a Turkish battery. Re-animated to enthusiasm by the personal prowess of their general, the Russians not only withstood the attack of the pursuing enemy, but repulsed them, and again became the assailants. The Turks disputed every inch of ground; but the Russians being reinforced by fresh troops from the covering armies, by numbers overpowered the valiant defenders of Ismail; carried post after post till they reduced the whole. With the fury of enraged barbarians, they effected a merciless, horrid, and undistinguishing slaughter, which spared neither age nor sex. The annals of Attila or of Gesneric, in the benighted ages of Northern Europe, furnish no record of savage butchery which surpasses the carnage at Ismail, by troops employed, according to their mistress's professions, to expel barbarism from this quarter of the globe, and instead of the bloody superstition of Mahomed, to establish the mild and peaceful religion of the meek and benevolent Jesus: such was the Russian mode of making converts to the

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Desperately
valiant
defence.

Stormed.

Cruel and
dreadful
slaughter.

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the Greek church, and extending christianity. The inflexible endurance * of the vanquished was as great as the inflicting cruelty of the conquerors; as the Russians would give, the Turks would receive no quarter: they either rushed on the bayonet, plunged into the Danube, or sought death by some means equally efficacious. Twenty-four thousand of the Turkish soldiers perished in this bloody contest: the governor of Ismail was found covered with wounds; the whole number of massacred Turks, including inhabitants of all ages, sexes, and conditions, amounted nearly to thirty-one thousand †. The slain on the side of the Russians exceeded ten thousand men, among whom were many of their officers.

Campaign
between
Sweden and
Russia.

The king of Sweden, having entirely constituted the affections of his people, and excited their indignation, by his conduct in the preceding year, was, through their unanimous efforts, enabled to open the campaign of 1790 early in the season. In the beginning of April, putting himself at the head of three

* The suffering fortitude of the Turks illustrates the very ingenious reasoning of Dr. Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, wherein he accounts for the unconquerable firmness of savages.

† About three hundred Circassian women, consisting partly of those belonging to the Governor's harem, and partly of others who had fled thither for refuge from other harems, were preserved and protected by an English gentleman, in the Russian service, Colonel Goble, who commanded the dismounted cavalry, when they were on the point of throwing themselves into the Danube to escape violation from the Cossack and Russian soldiers. See Otridge's Annual Register for 1791, page 101.

thousand

thousand forces in Finland, he penetrated into the Savolax, a district of Russia not far from Wiborg. Alarmed by the approach of the enemy within a hundred miles of Peterburgh, Catharine sent ten thousand troops to obstruct his progress. They found their enemy entrenched in a very strong position. Trusting to their superior numbers, the Russians attacked the Swedish lines; but the cool intrepid courage of the Swedes, headed by the personal valour and genius of their sovereign, repelled the attack: it was soon, however, renewed by the impulse of national pride, rivalry, indignation, and shame of being defeated by such a handful of men. The engagement, for about two hours, was most desperate, obstinate, and bloody; but rage, fury, and superior numbers, gave way, at last, to calm and determined valour. The Russians left about two thousand dead upon the spot, and Gustavus, encouraged by this success, advanced farther into Russia. Meanwhile, the fleet under the Duke of Suddermania sailed up the gulph of Finland. The prince projected the destruction of the Russian squadron lying in the port of Revel, the great naval arsenal, along with its docks and magazines. The ships were, eleven of the line, three of which carried a hundred guns each, and five frigates; and they were protected by numerous batteries. The Swedish fleet, notwithstanding all these obstacles, on the 13th of May penetrated into the harbour, and in the midst of the hostile fire, maintained for four hours a doubtful conflict; but towards the evening a violent storm arose, which obliged the Swedes to retreat. They afterwards fell in with a Russian fleet

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fleet from Cronstadt, and an engagement ensued, in which the Swedes at first appeared superior, when night intervening interrupted the contest. The next day battle being renewed, while the Swedish fleet was engaged with the enemy in front, the squadron from Revel appearing in the rear, the duke was in extreme danger of being surrounded, but by judicious manœuvres and bold exertions, assisted by a favourable wind, he extricated himself from the danger, and joined his royal brother not far from Wiborg. Against this city the land and naval force of Sweden directed their efforts; but while they were making dispositions for the purpose, the Russian fleet came in sight. The Swedes were now hemmed in between the united squadrons of Russia and the garrison of Wiborg. His majesty and his army were accompanied by a fleet of galleys, which were likewise enclosed; the only alternative, therefore, was, to force their way through the enemy or to surrender: the former was of course chosen: they effected their escape, but not without incurring very great loss of ships and troops, that were either taken or sunk: the whole number of men either killed or captured, amounted to seven thousand. The genius of Gustavus, stimulated by difficulty, soon refitted his shattered fleet, and recruited his diminished army. On the 9th of July, with his armament, he encountered a large Russian fleet, commanding his own squadron in person, he immediately offered them battle, and conducted his operations with so masterly skill, that, after a very obstinate conflict, he gained a decisive victory. The loss of the Russians amounted to four thousand five hundred

hundred prisoners, and nearly as many killed and wounded. This defeat astonished and alarmed Catharine : in the great talents of Gustavus, she was at last convinced, she had to encounter a formidable foe, which she had not apprehended in a contest with Sweden. Such an antagonist was not to be subdued either by overwhelming numbers, or the adversity of fortune. Being now abandoned by the Austrians, and threatened by the English and Prussians, she saw her projects respecting Turkey had little chance of being accomplished, if she continued at war with Sweden : she therefore directed the chief efforts of her policy to the attainment of a peace ; she accordingly signified to Gustavus a pacific disposition. The Swedish king, finding his country greatly exhausted by her extraordinary efforts, and not doubting that the defensive alliance would repress the ambitious projects of Russia as far as general security required, was not averse to these overtures of amity. Neither Catharine nor Gustavus communicated to their allies their pacific intentions, but concluded between themselves an armistice, which, in the middle of August, terminated in a peace.

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Peace between
Russia and
Sweden.

Freed from a Turkish war, Leopold had leisure to turn his chief attention to the affairs of the Netherlands. The Flemings had begun their opposition to Joseph from a desire of preserving existing establishments. They limited their wishes and designs to the maintenance of that constitutional liberty, which they inherited from their ancestors. Their principle of conduct was totally different from that of the French. Dislike of innovation, ecclesiastical, civil,
and

State of
affairs in
the Netherlands.

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1790.

Rise of a
democratical
spirit.

and political, was the leading feature of the Flemish character at the time they renounced their allegiance to Joseph of Austria. But the vicinity of the Netherlands to France produced a close intercourse between the two countries, and opened the way to the French doctrines, which various causes now co-operated to disseminate. Since the revolt the States General had exercised the supreme authority: the composition of that body was, in a considerable degree, aristocratical, as the states of the nobility and clergy had a greater share in the representation than the commons: this inequality was very soon remarked by the members of the third estate, and strongly reprobated by those who either had imbibed democratical notions; or from ambition, by raising the commons proposed to aggrandize themselves. So early as January 1790, a number of individuals, professing such sentiments, formed themselves into an association, which they called a patriotic assembly. After passing various resolutions of partial and subordinate reform, they framed a general and comprehensive system of revolution, which, subscribed by two thousand persons, they published as an address to the states, in the name of the people. They therein decreed the permanent exercise of sovereign authority, an aristocratical despotism, equally contrary to the rights of the people as the imperial tyranny of Joseph. The States General they allowed, with propriety, exercised the sovereign power on the *dismissal* of the emperor, and the declared independence of the Belgic provinces. But this authority, arising from a temporary cause, could only endure until a legitimate constitution, formed

formed and ratified by the people, could be established. The ancient constitution of the Austrian Netherlands was no more. It fell by the stroke that cut off its head Joseph II. of Austria, representative of the Dukes of Burgundy, in whom the functions of the other branches of the legislature centered: they were not original and absolute, but relative and conditional. The States General were therefore responsible to the people for all which they had done since the deposition of the emperor: a national assembly only could insure tranquillity and security to the commonwealth. These principles and claims were very offensive to the two higher orders, as they were totally inimical to the power which they wished to retain without controul. Knowing the influence of the parish priests among the people, they attempted to employ these in persuading their respective parishioners to sign a counter-address, requesting the states to seize and punish all those disturbers who wished to introduce innovations in their religion and constitution. Those clergymen, however, connected by the closest intimacy and friendship with their flocks, were by no means zealous and active in recommending a measure so very unpopular. The states farther endeavoured to prevent the sentiments which they wished to inculcate from being counteracted through the press. They issued a decree, that this great engine of public opinion should be limited to the same restrictions as under the sovereignty of the emperor; that all literary works should be subject to the scrutiny of censors, before they were republished; and that all publishers should be responsible for the con-

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Its votaries
propose to
subvert all
the constitu-
tuted au-
thorities.

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Contests
between the
aristocrati-
cal and
democrati-
cal revolu-
tionists.

tents of the books which they presented to the world. These attempts to restrain the actions, and even controul the thoughts, of the people, gave great dissatisfaction to those who wished for a larger portion of democracy in the constitution. The two higher orders, joined by a common opposition to the democratical schemes, formed one party, while the third, and all those who were inimical to privileged orders, formed another party. The nobility, on their side, possessed great inheritances, and were revered on account of their ancient families, and many of them highly esteemed for their personal characters : but the clergy, in a country distinguished for extreme bigotry, possessed peculiar influence : these circumstances prevented democratic turbulence from rising to the pitch which it would have otherwise attained. But the discontented restlessness of innovation soon triumphed in the minds of the populace over the submissive acquiescence of superstition. The higher orders attempted to awe the multitude by force, but soon found that here, as in France, the army had embraced the popular side. The commander of the Flemish troops was General Vandermerfch, who, after having long served under the emperor, on the first dawns of the revolution had returned to his native country. This gentleman was distinguished for his military talents and recent successes : he embraced the popular side, and spread his sentiments through the army. In March an attempt was made by the aristocratical party to remove the commander from his office, and deputies were sent by the states for this purpose. In this situation the general

neral adopted very bold measures : being nominated by the army commander in chief of the Belgic forces, in defiance of the states, he ordered the deputies to be committed to prison. He issued a proclamation, declaring that he was placed at the head of an army for the purpose of defending the civil and religious rights of the people, which he was determined to protect from all invasion. Officers of similar sentiments were placed at the head of the war departments ; and next to Vandermersch in the command of the army were the Duke of Ursel and the Prince of Arenberg. The states ordered the troops which were stationed at Brussels to march against the general. A civil war appeared on the eve of commencement between the aristocratic and democratic parties ; but the army, by some sudden impulse of passion, the causes of which have never been ascertained, abandoned that general whom they had so highly valued and recently exalted, and gave him up to the rage of his enemies. The congress of the states at this time was chiefly directed by Vandernoot and Van Eupen ; the former a lay nobleman, the latter an ecclesiastic. Under their direction, charges were drawn up against the general ; and also against the Duke of Ursel, hereditary chief of the nobles in Brabant, a man of large fortune and popular character. Vandermersch was doomed to a dungeon at Antwerp : Ursel was arrested and confined for five weeks, without any form of justice : but being tried and acquitted, he was still retained in confinement until a strong body of volunteers forcibly rescued him from this tyranny. These unjust and violent proceedings of the aristocratic

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party excited the severest reprobation of their adversaries. Priests and feudal tyrants (they said) had seized the sceptre and sword, and used them as instruments of injustice and cruelty against the most patriotic and exalted characters.

A government which had, in a few months from its formation, manifested such discord, was not likely to be permanent. The army having lost its honour as well as its general, became disheartened, and was now not unfrequently defeated. Great supplies were wanted for maintaining and paying the troops; but the congress had so disgusted the principal cities, that their applications for a loan were totally unsuccessful. Attempts were made in Holland and in England, but to no purpose; and it was evident that the Belgic states were every day, from their internal dissensions, becoming weaker in power, and less important in the estimation of foreign countries.

Leopold
prepares to
avail himself
of their
dissensions.

He offers to
redress their
real grie-
vances, but
vindicates
his right to
the sove-
reignty.

Leopold, aware of these circumstances, sent a memorial to the people of the Netherlands, which professed sincere regret for the despotic proceedings of the Austrian government; and declared the disposition of the prince to redress all their real grievances, but vindicated his undoubted right to the sovereignty of the Netherlands, and announced his resolution to maintain his claim. This address, together with the situation of affairs, revived the loyalists, or friends of the house of Austria; who, before overawed by the prevailing power, had made no efforts to resist. As the folly and violence of the present government became more evident and more hateful, this party increased: many moderate men, who had at first favoured the revolution, compared
the

the present miserable situation with the tranquillity and contentment enjoyed under Maria Teresa. A coalition of priests and nobles (they observed) was formed, obviously for the purposes of self-interest and ambition. If the States General should continue to govern, the Belgic nation must groan under a two-fold aristocracy. If a republic were attempted on democratical principles, the first probable consequence would be anarchy; which, after producing all its horrible evils, would terminate in a single despotism. An hereditary monarchy, properly limited and modified, appeared most suitable to the character and habits of the Flemings. These considerations induced many considerate men to favour a reconciliation with Leopold. The populace, without examining matters so deeply, but actuated by the impulse of resentment and indignation, against the usurpers of sovereignty, very readily joined the loyalists. That party now displayed a force which, even without the assistance of Austrian troops, was formidable and rapidly increasing. The king of Prussia, intimating that he had acknowledged Leopold as Duke of Brabant, the aristocratical party saw their hopes of foreign assistance totally vanished, whilst their internal power was fast declining: Leopold, now Emperor of Germany, immediately after his coronation, issued a manifesto, engaging himself, under an inaugural oath, and the guarantee of Britain, Prussia, and the United Provinces, to govern the Belgic Netherlands according to the constitution, charters, and privileges, which were in force during the reign of Maria Teresa. He offered a general amnesty to all who,

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Britain and her allies mediate between the Flemings and Leopold.

Under their guarantee the Netherlanders are restored to their ancient privileges.

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before the 1st of November, should return to their duty. The mediating powers notified to the Belgic states their approval of these terms ; but that body still refused to acquiesce, and published a counter-manifesto, denying Leopold's right to the sovereignty of that country, derived from his ancestors; and asserted, that though many of them had enjoyed the sovereignty of the Netherlands, they owed it entirely to the free choice of the people, who had a right to choose for their governors whomsoever they pleased. This doctrine, inimical to hereditary right, and favourable to popular election of sovereigns, combined with their enmity to monarchical power, to bring back the democratical party to some concert with the other revolutionists. The congress used various endeavours to animate the people to a general combination, but without effect. Willing to catch at every twig to save their sinking power, they proposed to confer the sovereignty on the Arch-duke Charles of Austria, and his heirs of that family, but with the perpetual exclusion of its head : these terms were rejected. Various engagements, uniformly unsuccessful, intimated that resistance was hopeless. The allied powers represented to them the futility of their efforts, and in its uselessness the cruelty of their warfare. The Austrian troops pressed on all sides, the Flemish people without exception acknowledged the authority of the Austrian prince, heir and representative of their ancient rulers. The members of the congress, and other leading partisans of the revolt apprehending severe re-sentment from the Emperor, especially after the refusal of his recent offers, sought safety in flight.

The

The Austrians used their success with wise moderation; the general, by observing the strictest discipline among his victorious troops, protected the persons and property of all men. In a convention guaranteed by the defensive alliance, and executed at the Hague, the 10th of December 1790, the Belgic provinces were not only restored to the rights and privileges which they enjoyed at the death of Maria Theresa, but obtained several advantages tending to render them more secure in the enjoyment of their ancient constitution. Thus the Catholic Netherlands having with reason and justice, to preserve their constitutional rights, resisted Joseph's tyranny, after they had experienced within two years despotical oppression, aristocratic usurpation, and democratic violence, at last found refuge and tranquillity in the mixed government that had descended to them from their ancestors.

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They obtain further concessions from Leopold.

They find their security in their ancient mixed government:

We left the national assembly on the establishment of some degree of tranquillity, proceeding in the formation of the new constitution. Operose as this object must have appeared to persons who intended to frame a system of legislation on principles justified by experience, a knowledge of human nature, and an accurate acquaintance with the character of the people for whom the constitution was intended, these revolutionists found the attainment of their purpose neither tedious nor difficult. Their system was free from complexity; equality was to be the basis of the polity to be formed; the means were simple and expeditious, perseverance in the course which they had so effectually begun, by reducing every inequality. In the application of this simple maxim they struck a very effectual blow,

Proceedings of the French revolutionists in forming the new constitution.

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Qualifica-
tions of
active
citizens,precludes
universal
suffrage.Division
into depart-
ments.

by a decree, announcing that there was no longer any distinction of orders in France, and thus crushed the nobility and clergy. Having equalized rank, the next business was to model elections agreeably to this new system. The choice of representatives was ultimately vested in primary assemblies, composed of men to be distinguished by the appellation of active citizens. The activity was to consist in contributing to the public exigencies, an annual sum not less than half-a-crown. By requiring this qualification in electors, they contravened their own principles of equality, and precluded universal suffrage; they excluded from legislation, beggars and many other citizens, not only effectually active in their respective vocations, but active by their tumults in the streets and galleries, in controuling the national assembly itself. It farther debarred from the legislation, the deliberative wisdom of fish-women and prostitutes, whose executorial efforts, had so powerfully promoted the revolutionary schemes. The primary assemblies, constituted with these exceptions to equality, were to chuse electoral assemblies; the electoral assemblies delegates to the legislative; judges, and executive administrators. That no vestige of antiquity might remain, they proceeded in the abolition of provincial distinctions; and dividing the whole kingdom into eighty-three departments, consolidated the diversities into one mass: as a geographical arrangement, this change was executed with great skill and ability, the departments chiefly took their names from mountains, rivers, and seas, which shape and bound countries; and as a political alteration, it certainly tended to render the

the government more uniform. A plan was established of municipal jurisdictions, to constitute a fourth assembly, to be chosen by the same electoral assembly which, constituted by the primary, appointed the members of the legislature. Financial legislation next occupying their attention, they began this branch of politics, as they had begun others, by establishing a simple and comprehensive principle, which would apply to every possible case. They enunciated a theorem totally new in jurisprudence, that *all property belongs to the nation*. Having declared their sovereign power over property, the next question was, how private and corporate wealth was to be forth coming. They saw it would be prudent to augment the pay of the army which was so very serviceable to the revolutionists, and which would become more and more attached to systems of confiscation, by sharing in the proceeds. There were many and numerous demands upon the public, and it was farther expedient to have a governmental bank, which would be able to accommodate the nation by advances, but a capital was wanting. Whatever their lawgivers were in wisdom and virtue they certainly manifested the national ingenuity in fertile invention and prompt expedient. They soon discovered a very efficient fund for the exigency, in the landed estates of the clergy; some politicians opposed the seizure of clerical property, not as unjust, because they knew its justice had been already established in the new code of ethics; but as impolitic. The appropriation would enrage the clergy, who still retained great influence among the less enlightened people; and would also displease and alarm fo-

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Confisca-
tion of
clerical
property.

reign powers, who might not only reprobate a confiscation, but dread the principle: these admonitions however were of little avail. A decree was passed declaring the ecclesiastical estates to be at the disposal of the nation. The clergy expostulated on the robbery, and excited great discontents among their votaries, which were farther increased by the nobility indignant at their own degradation. To counteract the growing disaffection, the assembly spread reports of plots and conspiracies, and thus by alarming their fears, diverted the attention of the people from the iniquities of government. Rumours were spread, that the princes were now in exile at Turin, and the aristocrats both in and out of the kingdom were confederating with foreign princes to effect a counter revolution. Aware that the king was considered by their adversaries as a prisoner, and that his acts could in that supposition be no longer binding, than the compulsion lasted, they endeavoured to procure from him an approbation of their proceedings which should appear voluntary; they attempted to prevail on his mild and compliant disposition, to come to the assembly and explicitly declare himself the head of the revolution, and satisfied with all their proceedings; but this application his Majesty resolutely refused. Finding the king inflexible, the republicans disseminated reports of new plots and conspiracies, for rescuing Louis from his present situation. To deter aristocrats and loyalists from such an attempt, it was very frequently declared in common conversation, and in the clubs, that an endeavour to extricate the king would certainly produce his death.

The

The queen was very openly and loudly threatened as the instigator of his majesty's refusal; the benignant Louis from tenderness for his wife and children was induced to make a concession, which no apprehensions for his personal safety could have extorted; and he repaired to the national assembly, and spoke to the purport desired by the republicans. The democratic party seeing the anti-republicans overwhelmed with dismay by the acquiescence of the king, resolved to take advantage of the consternation, and issued a decree obliging every member to take a newly devised civic oath, under the penalty of exclusion from voting in the assembly. They now published a general address to the nation, stating their acts and measures for the sake of public liberty, and their farther intentions in order to complete the great work of regenerating France. Various tumults having arisen, and murders and other outrages having been committed both at Paris and Versailles, the ringleaders were seized and punished by the assembly, which with considerable vigour chastised such riots and disorders, as did not promote its own purposes. Having again re-established nearly as much quietness as they wanted, and attained their object from the king, they resumed the affairs of the clergy. In February, they suppressed all monastic establishments, and for ever confiscated the lands. By another decree in April, they forfeited all the territorial possessions of the church, for the payment of the public debts, but generously allowed the plundered proprietors a small annual pittance from the booty. As the spoils were not immediately convertible into ready money, they employed

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Civic oath.

Scheme for
converting
the spoils of
the clergy
into ready
money.

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Boundless
power of
the mob.

The multi-
tude civil
and military
destitute of
religion.

ployed them as *pledges*. They issued out a species of notes under the name of *assignats*, being assignments to the public creditor of confiscated property; and payable to bearer, that they might serve the purpose of a bank paper currency. About this time, they began to affect an imitation of the Roman republic, and adopting its phraseology with one of its customs, decreed that mural crowns should be publicly presented to the conquerors of the Bastile.

The legislature were not without experiencing inconveniences from the diffusion of their own doctrines. They had found it necessary to idolize the mob; to talk of the majesty of the people; their supreme authority; their uncontrollable sway to which all things must bend. These ideas with the experience of their own force, operating on the ardent fancies and combustible passions of the French populace, meetings, clubs, parties, and individuals considered themselves as collectively and separately, rulers of the empire. They indeed regarded the national assembly as a necessary, legislative, and executive organ, but subject to their own general and supreme controul. As force was the great spring of government, the soldiers with reason claimed an important share in the direction of affairs; and by the laws of equality deemed themselves exempted from every degree of subordination and obedience, excepting so far as suited their wishes or convenience. Both the populace and soldiers conceived, that by their political regeneration, they were entitled without restraint to gratify every passion. The most active of the revolutionary leaders had spared no pains to banish from the people, that salutary moderator

derator of passion, the christian religion*. In extent of despotic power, the French mob equalled the Turkish sultan; the army the Janissaries; and the national assembly the Divan, despotic under the despot and his soldiers, but totally dependant upon these for its own sway. But the horrible tyranny of Turkish rule was mitigated by the Alcoran, whereas the despotic licence of France was devoid of any such corrective. A great portion of the vulgar both civil and military were rank infidels. Thus destitute of moral restraint, all the energy of a most ingenious people, all the French force and versatility of intellect and temperament, were the instruments of moral depravity. A great object of the republicans in the assembly had uniformly been to identify in the opinion of the civil and military vulgar, their interests and views with their own; and like other demagogues, while they professed to admit the rabble as their associates, really to employ them as their tools, and they in a great measure accomplished their purpose. There was under the direction of the national assembly, an army much more numerous than ever had been commanded by the French monarchs.

Many of the nobility, as we have seen, had been the zealous votaries of reform, while they conceived it tending to limited freedom and limited monarchy. But they had always been deficient in point of concert;

* Mirabeau laid it down as an axiom in the science of politics, that if they would have an effectual reform, they must begin by expelling christianity from the kingdom. This maxim was loudly praised, and generally followed by the republican partizans.

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Mixture of
ridiculous
levity and
serious ini-
quity.Anacharsis
Clootz, am-
bassador
from the
whole hu-
man race.

by suffering separate and subordinate views to occupy their attention, they had facilitated the progress of republicanism. They had already felt the fatal effects of disunion, among the opponents of jacobinism militant, they were destined to feel them more severely from jacobinism triumphant. There was in the proceedings of the French democrats, a strange mixture of ridiculous levity with the most serious iniquity. Paris at this time overflowed with adventurers from all countries. Among these was a Prussian of the name of Clootz *, who having left his own country for reasons recorded in the journals of the police, had resorted to Paris, and assuming the name of the antient Scythian sage, Anacharsis, set up as a philosopher, and by his lectures instructed the Parisians. But not having hitherto attained notoriety equal to his ambition, he bethought himself of the following expedient to become conspicuous: collecting a great number of his companions and other vagabonds who swarmed about the streets, and hiring all the foreign and grotesque dresses from the opera and play-houses, he bedecked his retinue; and proceeding to the national assembly, he introduced his followers, as strangers arrived from all countries of the globe, being the virtual ambassadors of all those enslaved nations who wished to be free, and were therefore disposed to enter into fraternity with France, for the glorious purpose of establishing universal liberty. This deputation was most graciously received by the assembly, of which it being evening sitting, many of the members were

* Otridge's Annual Register, p. 148.

in a condition † suited to a frolic. The legislature after some decrees and resolutions suitable to this contemptible farce, followed their deliberative levity, by a very serious act. A decree was proposed for the abolition of titles, and hereditary nobility, with all the heraldic monuments, which would recal to descendants the distinction and merits of their ancestors. In vain the nobles opposed so hasty and violent a proposition, it was immediately passed into a decree. Thus in one year, the national assembly crushed rank and distinction, confiscated property, annihilated hierarchy and aristocracy, left monarchy only an empty name, and perfected their levelling efforts; they now proposed that the 14th of July, the anniversary of the captured bastille, and of the birth of liberty, should be solemnized by a general confederation of Frenchmen, pledging themselves to maintain the new constitution, and to bind the king, the assembly, and the people civil and military in one general fraternity. This spectacle was exhibited in the field of Mars, appointed to be called ever after, the field of confederation. The king, the assembly, the people, and the army, were reciprocally sworn. The same oath was taken the same day through the whole kingdom.

Mr. Neckar friendly as he had been to the popular side, disapproved very highly of the late democratical proceedings, and especially the confiscations. Being now received with great neglect and displea-

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Abolition
of titles and
hereditary
nobility.

Summary
of changes
within the
year.

Anniver-
sary cele-
bration of
the 14th of
July in the
field of
Mars.

† Drunkenness, a vice formerly so little known in France, was since the revolution become extremely prevalent even among the lawgivers. Annual Register.

sure,

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Federal
oath.Violent
proceedings
against
those who
refused it.

Britain.

sure, and being apprehensive of his personal safety, he quitted the kingdom, and retired to Switzerland. In prosecuting their system of reform, the assembly thought it expedient to render the clergy still more dependant on their will. They accordingly passed a decree, imposing on clergymen a new oath, by which they were bound to submit to the constitution as decreed by the assembly, in all cases whatever. This oath was a direct breach of the oath taken at ordination; and great numbers of the clergy refused to swear contrary to their engagements and principles. All the recusants were immediately ejected from their benefices; and their livings filled by others. Thus a republican assembly endeavoured to force mens consciences to be guided by its decrees, and not satisfied with exercising tyranny over persons and property, attempted by the same despotism to enchain their minds.

This year the French revolution began to be better understood in Britain, and to produce more definite and specific opinions, either of approbation or censure, or of a mixture of both. Many Britons still continued upon British principles to admire the French revolution, and though they regretted the excesses which had accompanied its operations, yet expected that the violence would subside, and that a system of rational and beneficial liberty would be established. They saw that the plan of polity would considerably deviate from the British constitution. The greater number of literary men continued to favour the changes, and imputed the enormities to the vitiating system of government under

under which the French had so long lived, joined with the enthusiasm of new liberty. But the most experienced and discriminating of philosophical politicians perceived that the Gallic revolution in its nature, principles, and effects, was different from any former case, and avoided unqualified opinions concerning either its merits, or probable duration. They considered it as a composition of extraordinary phenomena, not yet sufficiently investigated to become the foundation of a just theory; but they saw that, the rapidity of French change far exceeded the progressive variations of circumstances, and the human character *. Writers of genius and erudition attached to certain visionary principles and doctrines, prized the French revolution more for its particular acts and innovations, than for the general assertion of liberty; and celebrated most highly those measures which overthrew hierarchy, reduced monarchy, and degraded aristocracy. Dissenters of very high literary reputation, and unimpeached private character, were so transported by their peculiar doctrines and sentiments, as to praise the lawless violence of the Parisian mob, and the abduction of the royal family in triumph, because these acts tended to overthrow the existing orders; and even recommended the example of the French to the imitation of the English. The able and eminent Dr. Price, and his many votaries in civil and religious dissent, manifested in 1790, an unqualified admiration of the French changes, and proposed a close connection between the revolutionists of

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The French
revolution is
better
understood.

Majority of
literary men
favour the
new system,
though they
censure its
excesses.

* See Dr. William Thomson's letter to Dr. Parr.

France,

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Mr. Pitt
and his
friends
forbear
discussion of
its merits.

France, and the people of England. Certain members of parliament, at the head of whom was Mr. Fox, continued to admire the principles of the French revolution, as tending eventually to produce a moderate and rational liberty, that would in time fit the circumstances and character of the people, and promote the tranquillity of Europe. The great ministerial leaders, cherishing the principles of constitutional liberty, could not reprobate in another country an attempt to procure that blessing, the enjoyment of which made this nation prosperous and happy ; and when they discerned the peculiar nature and tendency of the new system, conceiving that it became statesmen less to speculate than to provide, instead of delivering judgment on the measures of the French, vigilantly watched the conduct of Britons. The sentiments of the minister and his principal supporters concerning the affairs of France, were not hitherto declared. The first open censurers of the French revolution, were courtiers, who being the votaries of pageantry and shew, under a kingly government, regarded the pomp and ceremony of the palace more than the vigour and efficacy of the monarchy ; who regretted Louis's loss of royal trappings and appendages, more than the seizure of his power ; who considering the king's friends and attendants as no longer enjoying the balls and processions of Versailles, saw grievances, which being thoroughly conceived by their fancies, could attract their sympathetic feelings. But a ferocious confiscating democracy, overturning religion and property, did not equally affect their sensibility, because they by no means so clearly understood

stood the nature, or comprehended the extent of the evil. One class, indeed, eminent for ability and learning; venerable for profession and aggregate character, in the early stages of the French revolution, observed its leading principles with horror, and its conduct with dread. The clergy augured ill from a system guided by professed infidels, and sympathizing with plundered brethren, beheld not without apprehension, the contagion of confiscation so very near themselves. In this country, they knew there were men as willing to plunder the church as the most rapacious revolutionists of Paris. But though they disapproved of the French system, they did not deem it expedient to declare an alarm. Such an avowal, they thought, might imply an imputation of disloyalty, and enmity to the church, which could not be justly charged to the majority of Britons. English clergymen, therefore, did not decry the revolution, which many other literary men praised. In autumn 1790, the declared sentiments of Britons, with several modifications, were on the whole favourable to the French revolution. One man, however, was destined to effect a speedy and important change. Edmund Burke, having formed and delivered in parliament the opinions already recorded, with increasing anxiety continued to bestow the closest attention on revolutionary proceedings. He had many correspondents at Paris, of different nations, abilities, and sentiments. Through them he completed his acquaintance with the French system. While attending to its progress, and its operation within the country which it immediately affected, he carried

The clergy are alarmed by the infidelity and confiscation of the revolutionary system.

Burke's work on the subject.

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his views to the impressions that it had made in his own country. Penetrating into the various grounds of the praise which it had procured in England, his sagacity perfectly distinguished between those who rejoiced at what they conceived the emancipation of France, and those who in the destruction of the orders, and forfeiture of property, found a model which they wished to be copied in England. In considering the admirers and supporters of the French revolution, he, from the authority of Dr. Price among his votaries, apprehended that the late promulgation of that gentleman's political opinions in a sermon, might be very hurtful, unless precautions were used to expose the tendency of his doctrines. To convince mankind, especially Britons, that the French revolution did not tend to meliorate but to deprave the human character, to promote happiness, but to produce misery, to be imitated and copied, but to be reprobated and abhorred, Mr. Burke composed and published his work. To establish his position, he analyzed the intellectual principles by which the revolutionists reasoned; the religious, moral, and political principles by which the revolutionists acted; and contended that the effects which had proceeded, and were proceeding, were natural and necessary consequences of the principles and doctrines. He predicted the completion of anarchy and misery from the progressive enormity of the French system. Profound wisdom, solid and beneficial philosophy, enforced by all the powers of Mr. Burke's eloquence, produced a very great change in public opinion. From this time many men of talents, learning, and political

political consideration, openly declared sentiments unfavourable to the French revolution. The nobility, with few exceptions, were apprehensive of the danger which awaited their order if French principles became prevalent in Great Britain. The clergy publicly testified the opinion which they before held. Ministers, cautious as they were in avowing any sentiments concerning the French revolution, did not conceal the high estimation in which they held Mr. Burke's production. The public opinion, which at first had been so extremely favourable to the French revolution, was at the end of 1790 greatly divided.

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and effects.

The most important transactions belonging to the internal history of Britain in the recess of 1790, was the general election. The contests were not, however, carried on with the violence of former times. The country was in a state of progressive, and rapidly augmenting prosperity; the minister possessed the public confidence, and no great political question agitated the public mind. The election, which was most warmly disputed, did not owe the contest to the contention of parties. Of the elective bodies in Great Britain, none is of importance equal to Westminster; the seat of government, the royal family, and for half the year the principal nobility and gentry: hence there had usually been a very warm competition in this city. The dispute in 1788 between Lord Hood and Lord John Townsend, had been carried on with extreme eagerness on both sides; and with an expence calculated to have exceeded even the costly election of 1784. It was tacitly understood between the two parties, that at the

General
election.

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general election there should be no contest, but that Lord Hood and Mr. Fox should be jointly chosen. This apparent determination was represented to many electors of Westminster, as a coalition between the candidates to insure themselves the choice, and thus deceive the inhabitants. Mr. Horne Tooke a gentleman of great and deserved literary eminence, and also of very conspicuous political conduct, which was variously interpreted, proposed himself as the representative; he disavowed all connection with any party, and assuming an independent tone, procured a respectable number of supporters; he every day exhibited from the hustings a series of acute and poignant observation; clear, direct, and vigorous reasoning, not unworthy of being opposed to the vehement and forcible oratory of his illustrious competitor; his efforts however were unsuccessful. Though there were several disputed elections, yet there was none that attracted so much attention as the poll for Westminster, in which Horne Tooke was pitched against Charles James Fox.

CHAP. XLVI.

Meeting of the new parliament.—Convention with Spain is approved by parliament.—Expences of the late armament.—Unclaimed dividends.—Measures of Britain for repressing the ambition of Russia—submitted to parliament—Mr. Fox opposes hostilities with Russia—argument of Mr. Pitt on the importance of Oczakow—principle of British interference in continental politics—hostilities with Russia unpopular through the nation—war with Russia avoided.—New constitution of Canada—political principles introduced into the discussion.—Mr. Fox incidentally mentions the French revolution—Mr. Burke inveighs against that event, and the new constitution—Mr. Fox explains the extent and bounds of his approbation—declares the British constitution the best for this country—quotes Mr. Burke's speeches and writings favourable to liberty—rupture between these friends, and their final separation.—Question whether impeachments by the Commons before the Lords, abate with the dissolution of parliament—precedents and arguments for and against—determination of the house that impeachments do not abate by a dissolution.—Liberty of the press—motion of Mr. Fox for ascertaining and declaring the law of libels, and bill for that purpose—arguments for and against—postponed for the present, but is afterwards passed into a law.—State and conduct of the English catholics—they renounce the most dangerous moral and political doctrines of popery.—motion for their relief—modified and corrected by Dr. Horsey, it is passed into a law.—Petition of the church of Scotland respecting the test act—is rejected.—Full discussion of the slave trade—motion of Mr. Wilberforce for the abolition—arguments for and against—continuance of the trade defended on the grounds of humanity, justice, and expediency—Messrs. Pitt and Fox agree in supporting the abolition—the motion is

negatived.—Settlement at Sierra Leone.---Finance.---Supplies.---Indian finance.---Trial of Hastings, evidence for the prosecution closed---impressive speech of the defendant.---Session rises.

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Meeting of
the new
parliament.

Convention
with Spain
is approved
by parliament.

THE British parliament opened the 26th of November; and his majesty stated that the dispute between this country and Spain had been brought to an amicable termination. The first subject of parliamentary consideration was the convention * with the Catholic king. In a question concerning an injury, the great objects to be regarded were reparation for the past, and prevention of future aggression. In the present case, according to opposition, the restitution promised was incomplete, and the promises were not performed. Before the commencement of the dispute, we had possessed and exercised the free navigation of the Pacific Ocean, as well as the right of fishing in the South Seas, without restriction. But the admission of a part only of these rights was all that had been obtained by the convention. Formerly we had claimed the privileges of settling in any part of south or north-west America, from which we were not precluded by previous occupancy. Now, we consented to limit our right of settlement to certain places only, and even in these under various restrictions. What we had retained was vague and undefined, and consequently liable to be again disputed. We had reserved what was insignificant to ourselves, and resigned what was very beneficial to

* See page 122 of this volume.

Spain. To these arguments ministers answered; if we had not acquired new rights, we had obtained new advantages. Before the convention, Spain had denied our right to the southern whale fishery, and to navigate the Pacific Ocean; but now she had ratified those claims. In the convention, the wisdom and energy of ministers had vindicated the honour of the British flag, preserved the rights of private citizens, and established the glory of the British name over all the world, without shedding a drop of blood. On these grounds the majority in both houses approved of the terms of the adjustment. The liquidation of the expences incurred by the late armament, the minister proposed to separate from the general financial arrangements for the season; and to pay off in four years the incumbrances now incurred, by a distinct plan of finance. The first resource was the balance of the public money, which had accumulated in the hands of the bank of England from *unclaimed dividends**. The bank was agent for the public; received an adequate allowance for its services, and was therefore not entitled to retain a balance greater than the probable demand. Since public creditors forbore punctually demanding their interest, not the bank, who were agents for the payment of that interest, but the nation, their employers, should profit by that forbearance. The balance had been gradually increasing

Expences
of the late
armament.

Unclaimed
dividends.

* Many of the public creditors had omitted to demand their dividends when due; the money, therefore, issued for their payment, was used by the bank until the proprietors should demand the payment.

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from the year 1727, and now amounted to £ 660,000. Of this sum the minister moved that £ 500,000 should be applied to the public service, and that the creditors should have securities in the consolidated fund for payment, whenever the demand should be made. In addition to this sum, he proposed temporary duties upon sugar, British spirits, brandy, rum, malt, assessed taxes, and bills of exchange. Mr. Fox, and some other members, objected to the minister's proposition as unjust to public creditors, and also unfair to the bank. But it appearing to the majority of both houses that the creditors possessed the same security of prompt payment as before, and that no injury could accrue to an agent from his employer withholding money which was not necessary to the transactions which he was appointed to manage: notwithstanding various petitions from the bank, deprecating the application, a bill agreeable to the minister's project was passed into a law.

Measures of
Britain for
repressing
the ambi-
tion of
Russia,

The contest with Spain being thus concluded, another very important subject of foreign politics occupied the attention of parliament. At the congress of Reichenbach, the defensive alliance had proposed to Russia to accede to the peace which Austria was concluding, and that all conquests should be restored; but Catharine constantly replied, that she would admit of no interference between her and the Turks. Deprived, however, of the assistance of Austria, in the strength and determination of the allies she saw the impracticability of subjugating Turkey for the present, and now offered to restore all her acquisitions by the war,

except the town and dependencies of Oczacow. This possession, she conceived, would on the one hand secure her dominions against the irruptions of the Tartars, and on the other command an entrance into Turkey, whenever circumstances should prove more favourable to the execution of her ambitious designs. The allied powers perfectly comprehended the objects of Catharine, and deemed them incompatible with that tranquillity which it was the purpose of the confederacy to insure. There was, besides, an unfriendly disposition long manifested by Russia towards Great Britain. During our difficulties, she had headed a confederation for the express purpose of reducing the naval power of this country. When the commercial treaty between England and Russia was expired, Catharine not only declined renewal, but obliged our merchants to pay in duties twenty-five per cent more than she exacted from other countries, though they gave half a year's credit for their exports, and were always a whole year in advance for their imports. At the same time she concluded commercial treaties with France* and Spain, on terms that were advantageous to both these countries. Such indications of enmity to this country, joined to her ambitious projects, strongly impelled the British government to prevent the encroachments of the empress's court. Britain and her allies still adhered to their purpose, of inducing or compelling Catharine to restore the conquest. Finding pacific negotiations unavailing, the defensive alliance projected more

* See State Papers, and Segur's history of Frederic William.
effectual

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submitted
to parlia-
ment.Mr. Fox
opposes
hostilities
with Russia.

effectual interference. Having concerted forcible mediation for the security of Europe, his majesty, on the 24th of March, sent a message to both houses, stating his unsuccessful efforts for the establishment of peace, and that from the progress of the war, consequences so important might arise, as to render it necessary for this country to be prepared to meet them by an augmentation of our naval force. The message coming under consideration of Parliament, Mr. Fox opposed hostile interference on the following grounds: all wars were to Britain unwise, as well as unjust, that did not originate in self-defence. Too much latitude was given to the construction of defensive alliances, and treaties comprehended under that denomination had at present a very offensive tendency. By including in the objects of defensive resistance not only actual, and even probable, but possible injury, the professed defenders of Europe proposed to carry on war wherever they thought it expedient to any of the confederates. We had received no injury from Russia that could justify hostilities: her demands upon Turkey could not so materially affect Great Britain as to render a bloody and expensive war prudent to prevent their attainment: expediency as well as justice, forbade war with a power which neither directly attacked Britain, nor pursued any other object by which she could be endangered: the present plan of ministers tended merely to second the ambitious policy of Prussia, in whose intrigues and projects we were lately become too much involved: Was the protection of a barren district in the barbarous recesses of Tartary, a reason for exposing

exposing Great Britain to the evils of war? Was our trade with Russia, which employed eight hundred and fifty ships, trained in that hardening service thousands of seamen, afforded materials for our manufactures to the amount of two millions sterling, received our manufactured goods of more than a million, and yielded two hundred thousand pounds to our revenue, to be all foregone for the sake of a Turkish fortress? Even were Russia to succeed in conquering Turkey, instead of becoming more formidable to her neighbours, she would become weaker, and spread over a more extensive surface. Could wisdom and policy justify Britain in going to war, for preserving an empire inhabited by a barbarous and savage race, habitually connected with our rival; a race that for the sake of religion, humanity, civilization, and commerce, ought to be exterminated from the continent of Europe*.

Ministers argued that the aggrandizement of Russia, and the depression of Turkey, would injure both our commercial and political interests. While Russia was confined to the Baltic, her naval exertions would be inconsiderable; but if her fleet were suffered to range through the Mediterranean, she would become a great maritime power, and a formidable rival. The possession of Oczakow would facilitate not only the acquisition of Constantinople, but of Alexandria, and all lower Egypt. The object of Britain in opposing Russia was conformable to her general policy in continental inter-

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Arguments
of Mr. Pitt
on the im-
portance of
Oczakow.

* See parliamentary reports, 1791.

ference.

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Principle of
British in-
terference in
continental
politics.

ference. Britain had herself no ambitious end to pursue ; we had nothing to gain ; we wished only to remain as we were ; our alliances could only have the tendency of maintaining the balance of power. It was known to Europe, that our principles were pacific*. Standing on the high eminence which we occupied, we exerted our power only for the maintenance of peace. It was a glorious distinction for England, that, placed on a pinnacle of prosperity, having in her resources and power such motives to ambition, she exerted her strength not as the disturber, but the protector of her neighbours†: this had ever been her character and principle. In endeavouring to repress Russia, she pursued the same line of conduct which she had always chosen.

Hostilities
with Russia
unpopular
through the
nation.War with
Russia
avoided.

The supreme director of a free country, and especially of Great Britain, is PUBLIC OPINION. The forcible eloquence of Mr. Fox, coinciding with the immediate interests of merchants and manufacturers, impressed those bodies of men very powerfully. Their sentiments were rapidly and widely diffused through the nation, and rendered the people in general inimical to a Russian war. Ministers, feeling the due and constitutional reverence for the voice of the people, sacrificed their own counsels and measures to dictates so deservedly authoritative. Although Britain was thus prevented from compelling Russia to restore the key of Turkey, yet it was the energy of the

* See speeches of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Grenville. Parliamentary Reports.

† Speech of Mr. Grenville.

defensive alliance which induced Catharine to relinquish all the other acquisitions of the war.

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New constitution of
Canada.

The circumstances of one of our provinces called on parliament to frame a new constitutional code, that required discussions at all times important, but peculiarly momentous when they were combined with the questions which from the French revolution agitated the public mind. After the acquisition of Canada, a proclamation, as we have seen*, had been issued by his majesty, promising that measures should be adopted for extending to that country the benefit of the British constitution. Encouraged by this assurance, many British subjects had settled in the new province; and in consequence of the American revolution, great numbers of royalists had emigrated into a country so near to their own, and which contained inhabitants of congenial principles and sentiments; these readily coalesced with the British settlers, and joined them in frequent applications to remind government of the royal promise. The native Canadians readily admitted the excellence of the British constitution; but deprecated its unqualified extension to themselves, as tending to interfere with privileges which they had inherited from their ancestors. The Canadian noblesse, especially, enjoyed many feudal rights and immunities, which they feared the introduction of a new form of government might infringe or abolish. The minister, considering the diversity of character, sentiment, customs, and privileges, between the French Canadians on the

* See vol. I.

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one hand, the British and Anglo-American colonists on the other, proposed a separate legislature to each, that might be best suited to their respective interests, and social situation. With this view he purposed to divide Canada into two distinct provinces, upper and lower; and introduced a bill for this arrangement, and for the establishment of distinct legislatures. The division was to separate the parts which were chiefly inhabited by French Canadians, from recent settlers. For each of the provinces, a legislative council was to be hereditary, or for life, at the option of the king; and a provincial assembly was to be chosen by freeholders possessing lands worth forty shillings of yearly rent, or renters of houses paying ten pounds in six months. The provincial parliament was to be septennial, to assemble at least once in a year: the governor, representing the sovereign, might refuse his sanction to any proposed law, until the final determination of Britain were known. The British government renounced the right of taxation, and though it asserted the right of regulating external commerce, yet left the imposts to the provincial legislatures. All laws and ordinances of the whole province of Canada at present in force, were to remain valid until they should be altered by the new legislature. The bill passed through both houses without any material alterations. But in the house of commons its discussion gave rise to a debate concerning the French revolution, between Messrs. Burke and Fox, who respectively delivered their principles, sentiments, and doctrines on this momentous subject, more clearly, specifically, and categorically,

Political
principles
introduced
into the
discussion.

categorically, than in the disquisition of the former year. In considering the constitution which the legislature was preparing for Canada, Mr. Fox proposed to confer as much freedom as was possibly consistent with the ends of political establishments, instead of mere suitableness to any existing form. The scheme for the government of Canada adhered, he conceived, too closely to the British constitution, which though the most perfectly adapted to the character, habit, and circumstances of Britons, was not the best that possibly could be framed for any case. The United States in North America would have afforded a better model, more fitted both to the character and social situation of the Canadians, than the model which had been followed. Hereditary distinctions, possessions, and powers, ought not to be abolished where they had been long established; and were interwoven with the manners and sentiments of the people, as well as the laws*; but it was unwise to create them in countries not fit for their establishment. There was not in Canada either property or respectability sufficient to support an hereditary nobility. Mr. Pitt, in defending his own plan, confined himself to its adaptation to the proposed ends, and without entering into

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* These were nearly the words of Mr. Fox, at least this was certainly the substance, as appears after a careful comparison of the several reports of parliamentary debates. Yet he was misrepresented as having declared himself, without qualification, the enemy of hereditary rank and distinction. Far was he from asserting that an order of nobility was useless in any circumstances; he merely declared his opinion, that in its present state it did not suit Canada.

1791.

Mr. Fox
incidentally
mentions
the French
revolution.

Mr. Burke
 inveighs
against that
event, and
the new
constitu-
tion.

Mr. Fox
explains the
extent and
bounds of
his approba-
tion.

abstract speculations upon government, contended that a polity formed for any part of the British dominions, should be as nearly as possible modelled according to the British constitution; that such being his object, he conceived it effected by the present system for the government of Canada. In the reciprocation of debate, Mr. Fox still reprobated the council of nobles; said he could not account for the zeal in its favour, unless by the supposition that an opportunity was eagerly embraced of reviving in Canada, formerly a French colony, those titles and honours, the extinction of which some gentlemen so much deplored, and of awakening in the west that *spirit of chivalry* which had so completely fallen into disgrace in a neighbouring country. Mr. Burke, by these expressions, conceived that his opinions, and indeed his writings on the French revolution were attacked; he also heard doctrines advanced which he deemed repugnant to the British constitution; to controvert such opinions, he drew a contrast between that admirable system, and the new order of things in France. The Canada bill (he said) called forth principles analogous to those which had produced the French revolution. There was a faction in this country inimical to our constitution of church and state. It became parliament to watch the conduct of individuals or societies, which were evidently disposed to encourage innovations. Mr. Fox conceiving that Mr. Burke intended to implicate him in the censure passed on the admirers of the French revolution, replied to his animadversions. Mr. Burke's object appeared to be (Mr. Fox said) to stigmatize

stigmatize those who thought differently from himself on the French revolution, and who had expressed their opinions in parliament; and to represent them as the supporters of republican tenets. To vindicate himself from this charge, he distinctly and explicitly declared his own sentiments. The praise that he had bestowed, was given to the French revolution, which had abolished the old arbitrary government; and not to the system which was substituted in its stead. As a subverter of a tyranny that had enthralled twenty-five millions of people, he still would maintain that it was one of the most glorious events in the whole history of mankind. The new polity remained to be improved by experience, and accommodated to circumstances. The excellence of forms of government was relative, and depended on the situation, sentiments, and habits of the people*: the British constitution he thought the best and fittest for this country, and would to the utmost of his power oppose republicanism among Britons; but it was contrary to sound logic to infer, that because British liberty was most effectually secured by a government of three estates, therefore such an arrangement must be the fittest for France. He considered the late great change as the precursor of freedom and happiness to twenty-five millions, and therefore rejoiced at its success. From Mr. Burke himself he derived those principles, and imbibed those sentiments which Mr. Burke now censured: he quoted various passages from the speeches and writings of that

declares
the British
constitution
the best for
this country;

quotes
Mr. Burke's
speeches
and writings
favourable
to
liberty.

* These observations are conformable to Aristotle, as the English reader will see in his *Politics*, translated by Dr. Gillies, book iv.

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Rupture
between
these
friends,
and their
final separation.

eloquent and philosophical senator, and referred to measures which he had either proposed or promoted, and comparing them with the sentiments now or recently delivered, endeavoured to fix on him a charge of inconsistency. Mr. Burke complained of this allegation, and declared it to be unfounded: his opinions on government, he said, had been the same during all his political life. His conduct would evince the truth of his assertions: his friendship with Mr. Fox was now at an end; deep must be his impression of truths which caused such a sacrifice to the safety of his country; he gave up private friendship and party support, and separated from those he esteemed most highly. His country, he trusted, would measure the sincerity of his avowals, and the importance of his warnings, by the price which they had cost himself. He was far from imputing to Mr. Fox a wish for the practical adoption in this country of the revolutionary doctrines; but thinking and feeling as Mr. Fox and he now did, their intercourse must terminate. With great emotion, Mr. Fox deprecated the renunciation of Mr. Burke's friendship; and tears for several minutes interrupted his utterance*. When the first ebullitions of sensibility had subsided, he expressed the highest esteem, affection, and gratitude for Mr. Burke, whom, notwithstanding his harshness, he must still continue to love. Proceeding for some time in a strain of plaintive tenderness, he gradually recovered his usual firmness, and afterwards contracted no small degree of severity,

* This account is chiefly compressed from parliamentary debates, and partly taken from a gentleman who was present.

when

when having vindicated the resistance of France, on Whig principles, he renewed his charge of inconsistency against Mr. Burke, for deviating from those principles. This repetition of the charge of inconsistency, prevented the impression which the affectionate and respectful language and behaviour, and the conciliatory apologies might have probably made: the breach was irreparable; and from this time Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke never resumed their former friendship. In this discussion, the impartial examiner cannot find a single sentence, or even phrase, of Mr. Fox, which was not highly favourable to the British constitution; so that the political difference between these illustrious men, arose entirely from their opposite apprehensions concerning the French revolution, which hitherto was to a British senator a question of speculative reasoning, and not of practical contention; but Burke had already conceived such an abhorrence of the Gallic system, that he could not bear any expression of approbation respecting a change which he deemed destructive to the best interests of society.

With colonial policy, parliament this year considered also important questions of domestic law. One of these arose from the trial of Mr. Hastings: it was doubted whether an impeachment brought by the commons of England abated by the dissolution of parliament. Several members of high note in the profession of the law, and among the rest Sir John Scott, the solicitor general, were of opinion, that the renewal of the impeachment was neither justified by law, precedent, nor equity.

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Question whether impeachment by the commons before the lords abate with the dissolution of parliament.

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Precedents
and argu-
ments for
and against.

It was a question, they said, concerning which there was no statute ; we must therefore be governed by the law of parliament, that is by the orders of the lords, and by usage. The lords in 1678, had affirmed, that dissolution did not preclude the renewal of an impeachment ; but that order was not sanctioned by former practice. They had suffered the impeachment of Lords Danby and Stafford to proceed from the stage in which they had been left by the old parliament ; but at that time the nation was in a ferment about the Popish plot ; detested Stafford as a catholic, and execrated Danby as the supposed promoter of arbitrary power and a connection between the king and Louis XIV. Both peers and commons were seized with the same enthusiasm against popery and France, and under its influence continued the impeachment, contrary to law and usage. From these cases, therefore, which were peculiarly circumstanced, no precedent could be drawn. In 1585 Lord Danby was by the house of lords freed from the impeachment, which in fact reversed the precedent of 1678. Lords Salisbury and Peterborough being accused of high treason, pleaded a dissolution, and in 1690 were liberated. On the same grounds the Lords Somers and Halifax, Sir Adam Blair, and others, were released. To support their position, they also adduced several analogies, and concluded with arguments from equity ; by continuation of an impeachment the accusers might be changed, and even not a few of the judges. If a trial is to last beyond one parliament, may it not be prolonged to an indefinite term, or even during life : a court of justice

tice should be free from bias and prejudice; but how could this be the case with a tribunal in which there were so many new judges; and some of them even accusers from the lower house. The supporters of continued impeachment reasoned in the following manner. If the alledged precedents existed, they would be extremely prejudicial, because they would enable the sovereign to save a favourite servant, and to defeat the purposes of national justice; and it would become the legislature speedily to remedy such an evil, by a law enacted for the purpose. This remedy, however, could only be applied to future cases, without including present or past; but such a series of usages does not exist*. There is no evidence of parliamentary practice to justify the cessation of a trial before the truth or falsehood of the charges be ascertained. Parliamentary records demonstrate that in ancient times impeachments were continued after dissolution. But without searching into remote monuments, in the reign of Charles II, in 1673, when there was no ferment either on the one side or the other, the house of Lords declared their writs of error, petitions of appeal, and other judicial proceedings, should be narrowed as to the portion of time which they were to occupy during a session, but should extend from parliament to parliament, if they were not decided. The reason of this order evidently was, that on the one hand judicial proceedings might not employ any part of the time which was required by legislative, on the other, that the objects either

* See Speeches of Mr. Pitt and of Mr. Fox.

of civil or criminal justice might not be defeated by discontinuance of process. The precedents, it was contended, did not apply : and in the various cases alleged, the proceedings had been discontinued by a general pardon, admission to bail, or some other cause, and not from the dissolution of parliament. These positions their supporters endeavoured to evince by a consideration of the very cases that were quoted by the advocates of the opposite doctrine. They further argued, that decisions of courts of law, and the authority of judges, with few exceptions, sanctioned the same opinion ; and cited cases to prove their position : the general analogy of judicial proceedings illustrated the conformity of their conception of the law of parliament with the established modes of process before subordinate tribunals : the commons are the public prosecutors, and in this respect analogous to the attorney or solicitor general in ordinary cases of criminal prosecutions. The removal of an attorney general does not quash an information or indictment ; and the process is carried on by his successor. The public prosecutors before the house of peers, are the successive houses of commons, as before the inferior courts, they are the successive attornies general. The house of peers are the judges in causes carried on at the instance of the house of commons ; the peers may be not all the same in successive parliaments, as the judges of the inferior courts may be changed while the trial is pending. Equity and expediency coincide with analogy ; impeachments are calculated for bringing to condign punishment criminals too

exalted for the inferior courts; criminals, who to secure themselves or their friends from all responsibility as ministers of the crown, might advise a dissolution, as often as it should be required for their safety. Hence parliament would be no longer able to controul either the civil or judicial administration of the kingdom. The cabinet and courts of law would remain equally without a check; it is therefore clear from the weight of precedents, the authority of the greatest luminaries of the law, the principles of the constitution, the analogy of public trials, the immutable rules of equal justice, and the dictates of expediency and common sense, that impeachments continue notwithstanding the dissolution of parliament. On these grounds a great majority in both houses voted that the impeachment of Warren Hastings was still depending.

Determination of the house, that impeachments do not abate by solution.

An enquiry concerning the judicial power of parliament was soon followed by a discussion of the powers of juries. One of the chief engines of that moral and political knowledge, of those sentiments and privileges of rational and beneficial liberty which prevail in Britain, is a FREE PRESS. By this vehicle a writer may communicate to the public his observations, thoughts, and feelings, and according to his talents, learning, and dispositions, may inform and instruct mankind; and thus the press bestows all the knowledge and wisdom which cannot be imparted by oral delivery. But as all persons who address the public through this vehicle are not both capable and disposed to inform and instruct society, an instrument of general good is

Liberty of the press.

CHAP.
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frequently productive of considerable, though partial evil. The liberty of the press has often permitted seditious, treasonable, immoral, and blasphemous libels; and generated mischiefs that were followed by very pernicious consequences. For a considerable time after the invention of printing, government possessed the means of preventing noxious publications, as the press was liable to the inspection of a licenser; but the preventive was much worse than the evil; and the subjection of writings to a previous examination, being found totally incompatible with the purposes of beneficial freedom, ceased soon after the revolution. Precluded by the law from preventing the publication of hurtful works, certain judges endeavoured to deter writers by increasing the punishment: to avoid one extreme running into its opposite, they attempted to attach criminality to productions, that before would have been reckoned innocent; and to supply the supposed deficiency of preventive justice, they tried to enlarge the precincts of penal law. They also endeavoured to change the judicial rules established by the constitution. For a series of years it had been maintained by very high legal authority, as we have already seen*, that the truth of an allegation could not be pleaded in bar of an indictment for a libel, and also that in cases of libel juries were to investigate the fact only; to return a verdict relative to the proof of the allegations, but to leave the criminality to the judge; and though these doctrines had been questioned by very high legal autho-

* See vol. ii. c. ix.

rity,

rity*, yet they were most frequently followed in recent practice. Various cases occurred in which guilt had been found on grounds, that in the popular estimation were inadequate, or punishment had far exceeded the criminality that was evinced. Mr. Fox having adopted the same sentiments respecting some late decisions, and disapproving of the interposition of crown lawyers, introduced a bill declaring the power of the juries to decide upon the law as well as the fact in trials of libels. Where any special matter of law is pleaded (said Mr. Fox) the judge and not the jury is to decide; but where a general issue is joined, and the law is so implicated with the fact that they cannot be separated, the jury must, as in all other criminal processes, bring in a general verdict of guilty or not guilty. The decision of this important question greatly depended on the import of the word *meaning*, used in all indictments for libels. The different senses annexed to this term Mr. Fox explained, and marked with discriminating precision. The term to *mean* might, he observed, be understood to imply a proposition according to strict *grammatical and logical construction*, or to express the MORAL INTENTION of a writer or speaker. In the former sense it had been received for many years by judges and crown lawyers; in the latter it ought to be interpreted by a candid and impartial English jury, who were to investigate the intention of the accused, as a part of the fact to be proved or disproved. It is the intention that must constitute guilt, if any guilt existed.

Motion of
Mr Fox for
ascertaining
and de-
claring the
law of
libels, and
bill for that
purpose.
Arguments
for and
against.

* See vol. ii. chap. ix.

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The bill was opposed as an innovation on the laws of the kingdom, that was agitated at present by the dangerous maxims which were embroiling our neighbours. In such circumstances we ought to avoid novelties, civil and political. The present process had been the practice for a long course of years, without producing any oppression to the subject; the judges were independent of the crown, and could have no motive to unfair and partial decisions. This bill was not debated as a party question, but as a subject of existing law, justice, and constitutional right. Mr. Pitt was no less vigorous in its support than Mr. Fox, or Mr. Erskine. In the house of lords, Lord Grenville supported the motion with no less zeal than Lord Loughborough, and Lord Camden took the lead in promoting its success. After passing the commons by a great majority, it was rejected by the peers; but the following session, being again proposed, it passed into a law.

Postponed
for the
present; is
afterwards
passed into
a law.

Mr. Fox also proposed a law for depriving the attorney general in right of the crown, and every other person in his own right, of a power to disturb the possessor of a franchise in a corporation, after having quietly exercised it for six years. The end of this proposition was, to secure the rights of election, and prevent vexatious prosecutions for political purposes: the bill was passed into a law.

State and
conduct of
the English
catholics.

Parliament, endeavouring to remove all restrictions upon natural freedom, as far as was consistent with security, directed its attention to the Catholics. The English catholics were now totally changed,

changed, and no longer resembled the Romanists of the seventeenth century ; nor even those who, at a later period, wished to exalt a popish pretender to the throne. They were now quiet and peaceable subjects, friends to the present government, and favourable to our constitution of church and state, which was so mild and tolerant to every religious sect that worshipped God according to their own conscience, without disturbing the public tranquillity. Many of the catholics, as they mingled with protestants, imbibed a great share of their mildness and moderation ; and, without relinquishing the sensible rituals, prescribed observances, or the metaphysical theology of the popish church, were really protestants in their moral and political principles and conduct. A considerable body of them had recently protested in express terms against doctrines imputed for near three centuries to papists. They denied the authority of the pope in temporal concerns, his right to excommunicate princes, and to absolve their subjects from their oaths of allegiance. They disavowed the lawfulness of breaking faith with heretics ; and denied that any clerical power could exempt man from moral obligations. The penal laws against catholics arising from circumstances and conduct so totally different from the present, were still extremely severe. To render the law more suitable to their present sentiments and character, Mr. Mitford proposed to repeal the statutes in question, so far as to exempt from their penal operations those who had renounced the hurtful doctrines above-mentioned, under the denomination of the PROTESTING CATHOLIC DISSENTERS, upon these catholics taking an

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They renounce the most dangerous moral and political doctrines of popery.

Motion for their relief :

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modified
and correct-
ed by Dr.
Hortley, it is
passed into
a law.

an oath conformable to the protest. The principle of the bill was generally approved; and the bench of bishops displayed the most liberal zeal in its favour. Dr. Horsely especially exerted his great abilities, not only in promoting its success, but in removing a clause which was neither agreeable to its principles nor conducive to its objects. In the proposed oath, the doctrine that princes excommunicated by the pope might be deposed and murdered by their subjects, was declared to be impious, heretical, and damnable. The catholics felt no reluctance to express their own rejection and disapprobation of such doctrine; but from scruples founded on a tender regard for the memory of their progenitors, they could not induce themselves to brand it with the terms which the oath prescribed. To remove this objection, he proposed the oath which had been adopted in 1778: this alteration was admitted, and the bill was passed into a law.

Petition of
the church
of Scotland
respecting
the test act,

The church of Scotland perceiving a disposition in parliament to grant relief to non-conformists, transmitted from the general assembly a petition praying for the repeal of the test act as far as it applied to Scotland; and on the 10th of May Sir Gilbert Elliot made a motion conformably to the petition. The supporters of the motion endeavoured to prove that the law, as it now stood, was inconsistent with the articles of the union. Scotland, by her constitution, and by treaty, had a separate church, and a separate form of religion. By the treaty of union she was to have a free communication of civil rights; but a test which, as a condition for attaining those civil rights, imposed on her a necessity of de-

parting from her own established theology, and submitting to the system of England, either abridged her religious liberty by means of the civil attainments, or obstructed the civil attainments through the religious obligations. When the two kingdoms entered into a treaty of union, being independent nations, they meant to stipulate and contract on terms of perfect equality. Was it not an infringement of that equality, that a Scotchman entering into any British office in England should solemnly profess his attachment to the church of England, which a scrupulous man might deem a dereliction of his native church; while an Englishman appointed to an office in Scotland incurred no similar obligation. The opposers of the motion argued, that the test must have been understood as a stipulation at the time of the union, and had never been represented as an hardship till the present time. The grievance was merely imaginary; the test was not a dereliction of the church of Scotland, but a pledge of amity with the church of England. The general sentiment of members of the Scottish church was affection and respect for the sister establishment: but in Scotland there were, as in England, sectaries of various denominations, whose sentiments were less liberal. Against such sectaries it was just as well as expedient, that the test should operate; otherwise the church of England would incur a danger from them, to which from the sectaries of England she was not exposed. Since there was no test in Scotland, the proposed exemption would let in upon the church of England dissenters and sectaries of every denomination; and thus break down the fence which

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is rejected.

Full discus-
sion of the
slave-trade.Motion of
Mr. Wil-
berforce for
the aboli-
tion.Arguments
for

which the wisdom and justice of parliament had so often and so recently confirmed. This petition, in reality, arose ultimately from the English dissenters. These had operated on the church of Scotland by representing themselves as Presbyterian brethren. Many of the Scottish clergymen, not discovering the total diversity of political sentiments that subsisted between them and many of the English dissenters, were, from supposed religious sympathy, induced to give them their support. The majority of the house being impressed by these arguments, voted against the proposition.

The slave-trade underwent this year a much more complete discussion than when it was formerly agitated. The facts on both sides had now been very thoroughly examined : there was fulness of information ; so that the public and parliament had the amplest means of viewing the subject in every light. Mr. Wilberforce, on the 18th of April, proposed a bill for preventing the farther importation of slaves into the British colonies in the West Indies. In his prefatory speech he considered, as he had done two years before, first humanity, and secondly policy. He traced the condition of the Africans from their native country to the West India plantations ; and, according to the information which he had collected, in more copious detail, with more numerous instances, repeated his former statements of the causes of slavery, the treatment of the negroes on their passage, and their sufferings under the planters. On the ground of policy he strongly argued that the abolition of the slave-trade was expedient for the West India planters and the British nation. Com-
pelled

pelled to promote multiplication among the slaves, the planters would soon find that their present negroes, in a climate so congenial to their native Africa, would, if well treated, people the plantations; and if allowed to acquire some little interest in the soil, would be stimulated to much greater exertions. The loss of seamen which Britons sustained in the negro trade was immense. From Liverpool, in one year, three hundred and fifty ships, having on board twelve thousand two hundred and fifty men, lost two thousand four hundred and fifty, being one fifth. The commercial profits were to be totally disregarded, when acquired by such a violation of humanity, and at the expence of so many valuable lives of British sailors.

The continuance of this trade was defended on the grounds of justice, policy, and even humanity. Slavery had been established time immemorial in various parts of the earth, especially in Africa and the adjacent countries. So far was it from being reckoned a crime, that the Old Testament frequently mentions male and female slaves under the names of bondsmen, handmaids; and others of similar import, and never censures mancipation, but speaks of all its offices as just employments. The characters held up to imitation had slaves themselves, and endeavoured to acquire slaves to others *. The habits and

and against it.

* Joseph, a patriarch so highly favoured by God, when he became prime minister to Pharoah in consequence of the foresight conferred on him by the divine gift, having laid up stores of provisions against the season of scarcity, purchased with the king's corn the liberties of his subjects; and nothing in this procedure is blamed by the sacred historian. It appeared, indeed, perfectly fair and reasonable to the subjects of an African prince.

sentiments,

sentiments of Africans render this condition by no means so grievous to them as it would be to people unaccustomed to the daily contemplation of slavery. The assertion of the abolitionists, that the hope of acquiring prisoners to be sold to Europeans is the chief cause of war, is far from being generally true. Wars in Africa, as well as wars in Europe, arise from pride, resentment, envy, jealousy, emulation, ambition, and other passions, besides avarice alone. As an accurate knowledge of the interior country increased, it was more clearly comprehended that captives, though a consequence of war, were far from being its most frequent objects. The purchaser of slaves taken in war preserves the lives of captives that would be otherwise butchered. Their ferocious conquerors would give way to the savage gratification of rage and cruelty, if the thirst of blood were not changed into the thirst of gain. The extreme indolence of the Africans, notwithstanding the fertility and even spontaneous productiveness of the soil, renders their supplies of the necessaries of life very scanty. Prisoners taken in war, therefore, are great burthens upon the captors; and unless there was a market for vending them, they would be immediately massacred, not merely from cruelty, but from the savage economy of those barbarians; and the European traders saved many a life. Our merchants, on the faith of parliament, had embarked property to a great amount in this trade; the total loss of which would immediately follow the abolition. The legislature had invited them to engage in the traffic, that Britain might be furnished from their plantations with those commodities which habit has

now

now rendered universally necessary, and if not supplied by them, must be purchased from other countries. It invited them also to engage in this commerce, that the carriage of their productions might rear up a navy; yet now, when they have a capital of seventy millions embarked, when several islands lately occupied, and therefore thinly peopled, require a constant succession of fresh supplies; and when twenty millions of debt in mortgages and deeds of consignment, press heavily on the West India proprietors, the abolition is proposed in contradiction to so many acts of parliament, and without compensation of the only means by which they can be relieved from the enormous load. Is it consistent with British justice to depreciate, and even destroy, property, engaged in a commerce which the legislature pledged itself to protect, and repeatedly declared its disposition to improve? But private property would not alone be affected; from this trade the revenue would suffer a very material diminution. The evidences adduced to prove the horrid cruelties practised upon slaves were represented to be in some instances false, in many partial, in almost all exaggerated. It is the interest both of the transporting owners of slaves, and their purchasers in the West Indies, to treat them humanely, and easy to devise regulations for enforcing this treatment, and punishing the contrary. But were Britain from an impulse of benevolent enthusiasm to abolish the slave-trade, under a supposition that it subjected the Africans to the most poignant misery, would not other European nations engaged in the trade supply the vacancy left by our relinquishment of a traffic necessary for rais-

Continu-
ance of the
slave-trade
defended on
the grounds
of huma-
nity, justice,
and expedi-
ency.

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Messrs. Pitt
and Fox
agree in
supporting
the aboli-
tion.The motion
is negatived

ing commodities naturalized to the European palates? Would the purchasers, the venders, or the subjects sold, be less numerous? Would fewer slaves be exported from Africa? Respecting the effects of this commerce on our navy, the friends of the abolition were totally misinformed. A naval commander of the very highest eminence, Lord Rodney, had declared that the power of obtaining from Guinea ships, so numerous a body of men inured to the climate, whenever we wished to send a fleet to the West Indies on the breaking out of a war, was, in his opinion, a consideration of great moment. His Lordship's opinion was illustrated, and his authority confirmed, by concurring testimonies of other officers, both of the army and navy. The abolition would be equally contrary to the commercial and political interests of the public, as to the rights and well-founded expectations of private individuals. On this question Messrs. Pitt and Fox took the same side, and supported the abolition with every argument that genius could invent; but their united eloquence was not effectual: on a division it was carried in the negative by a majority of one hundred and sixty-three to eighty-eight. The benevolent spirit which prompted the abolition of the slave-trade directly, produced an attempt gradually to demonstrate its inefficacy and inutility. For this purpose its impugners projected to try an experiment whether Africa could not be civilized, and rendered more lucrative as a vent for manufactures, than as a nursery for slaves. Mr. Devaynes, who had long resided at Sierra Leone, on the coast of Africa, in the eighth degree of north latitude, attested that the soil is excellent,

cellent, and produces cotton, coffee, and sugar, with the slightest cultivation. There a society proposed to establish a colony in hopes of effecting the desired change in the character and condition of the Africans. A bill for the establishment of such a company was introduced by Mr. Henry Thornton, and passed through both houses without opposition.

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Settlement
at Sierra
Leone.

Previous to the production of his financial plan, Mr. Pitt proposed to appoint a committee to consider and report the amount of the public income and expenditure during the last five years; also, to inquire what they might respectively be in future, and what alterations had taken place in the amount of the national debt since January 5th, 1786. The report stated that the annual income, on the average of the three last years, was sixteen millions, thirty thousand, two hundred and eighty-six pounds; and the annual expenditure fifteen millions, nine hundred and sixty-nine thousand, one hundred and seventy-eight pounds, including the annual million for liquidating the national debt: the balance, therefore, in favour of the country, was sixty-one thousand, one hundred and eight pounds*. Mr. Sheridan, as usual, took the lead in combatting the financial conclusions of Mr. Pitt, and moved no less than forty resolutions, which were intended to shew that the past revenue had been considerably inferior to ministerial calculations; and that in calculating the future income, the minister had overlooked contingencies which recent experience demonstrated to

Finance.

* 16,030,186
15,969,178

£ 61,108
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Supplies.

Indian
finance.

be probable. The greater number of these propositions were negatived, and others were amended. Various resolutions were framed by ministers, confirming, in detail, the report of the new committee, and maintaining the calculations which were founded on their enquiry. The supplies were nearly the same as in the usual peace establishment, and no fresh taxes were imposed. Mr. Dundas produced his annual statement of Indian finance, which had been in a state of so progressive prosperity ever since the establishment of Mr. Pitt's plan of territorial government, and the commencement of Mr. Dundas's executive direction. It appeared from the documents which he presented, that the British revenues in the East Indies, amounting to seven millions, after defraying all the expences of government, left a clear surplus of near a million and a half, either to be laid out in investments, or applied to contingent services. Among the pecuniary grants of this year was an annuity of twelve thousand pounds, bestowed on his majesty's third son, Prince William Henry, created about two years before Duke of Clarence.

Trial of
Hastings.
The evi-
dence for
the prosecu-
tion closed.

This year the prosecution of Mr. Hastings closed its evidence (May 30). The managers proposed an address to the king, praying him not to prorogue the parliament until the trial was finished; but this address was negatived. Mr. Hastings, when the prosecution was closed, addressed the court in a speech of singular acuteness, force, and eloquence, exhibiting his view of the result of the prosecutor's evidence, contrasting the situation in which he found with the situation in which he left British India; explicitly, but not arrogantly, detailing the counsels and

and conduct by which he had effected these great ends : he appealed to the commons, his accusers, in the following dignified and striking peroration.

“To the commons of England, in whose name I am arraigned for desolating the provinces of their dominions in India, I dare to reply, that they are, and their representatives persist in telling them so, the most flourishing of all the states of India. It was I that made them so : the value of what others acquired I enlarged, and gave shape and consistency to the dominions which you hold there : I preserved it : I sent forth its armies with an effectual but economical hand, through unknown and hostile regions, to the support of your other possessions ; to the retrieval of one from degradation and dishonour, and of another from utter loss and subjection. I maintained the wars which were of your formation, or that of others, not of mine : I won one member of the great Indian confederacy from it by an act of seasonable restitution ; with another I maintained a secret intercourse, and converted him into a friend : a third I drew off by diversion and negotiation, and employed him as the instrument of peace. I gave you all, and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace, and a life of impeachment.” Of Mr. Hastings’s hearers, even those who could not admit a plea of merit as an abatement of special charges, were very forcibly impressed by this energetic representation. The defence of the accused was, by the direction of the court, postponed till the following session, and on June 10th the parliament was prorogued.

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Impressive
speech of the
defendant.

Session rises.

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Peace between Russia and Turkey—on moderate terms.—Reasons of Catharine's apparent moderation.—Poland attempts to recover liberty and independence.—Wise, moderate, and patriotic efforts for that purpose.—New constitution, an hereditary, mixed, and limited monarchy—effected without bloodshed.—Rage of Catharine at the emancipation of Poland.—She hopes to crush the new system of Poland.—Impression made by the French revolution on other countries—on sovereigns.—Circular letter of the emperor to other princes.—Equitable and prudent principle of British policy respecting the French revolution.—Paris—ejection and banishment of the clergy who refused the civic oath.—Progress of confiscation.—Forfeiture of the estates of emigrants.—Abolition of primogeniture.—Invasion of the rights of German princes.—The emperor remonstrates against this violation of national engagements.—Proposed jaunt of the king to St. Cloud—is prevented by the populace.—Memorial of Louis delivered to foreign powers.—Flight of the king.—He is arrested at Varennes.—Proceedings of the legislature during his absence.—He is brought back to Paris.—The monarchical party adopts a vigorous system, but too late.—State of parties.—The king's friends advise him to accept the constitutional code.—He accepts it in the national assembly.—Honours paid to infidel philosophers.—Want of money.—Inspection of accounts.—Dissolution of the national assembly.—Review of the principal changes effected by this body.—How it found and left France.—In all its excesses it manifested the genius and energy of the French character.—Progress of political enthusiasm.—Britain.—Certain ingenious visionaries expect a political millennium.—Thomas Paine.—Rights of man—Dexterous adaptation of to the sentiments and passions of the vulgar—astounding popularity of among the lower ranks.—Commemoration

miration of the French revolution at Birmingham.—Riots.—Destruction of Dr. Priestley's library—the Doctor's conduct. Comparison between Priestley and Paine.—Rapid and extensive diffusion of democratic principles.—Wide diffusion of superficial literature—favourable to revolutionary projects. Mary Anne Wollstonecraft.—Debating Societies.—Cheap editions of Tom Paine's works.—One able and profound work in favour of the French Revolution.—Vindicia Gallica.—Marriage of the Duke of York to the Princess of Prussia.

CATHARINE perceived her grand object of subjugating the Ottomans, for the present to be impracticable, and now satisfied herself with endeavouring to compel the Sultan to a peace, before the interference of the confederates could prevent her from dictating the terms. With this view her armies took the field early in spring, repeatedly defeated the enemy, and compelled them to retire nearer to Constantinople; and to enhance their danger, several symptoms began to appear in Asiatic Turkey of a disposition to revolt: menaced by most imminent perils both in Asia and Europe, and apprized that the co-operation of Prussia and of Britain, was now obstructed, Selim began to listen to the proposals of the Empress; the negotiation was not tedious; and a peace was concluded on the 11th of August at Galatz, by which Russia retained Oczakow, and the country between the Bog and the Dnieper, which had belonged to Turkey before the war. The latter of these rivers was to be the boundary of both powers: each to be equally entitled to the free navigation of the river; and each to erect fortifications on its respective shores. However important this acquisition might be to Russia, it was

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on moderate
terms.

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Reasons of
Catharine's
apparent
moderation.

Poland at-
tempts to
recover
liberty and
independ-
ence;

certainly much inferior to the expectations which she entertained at the commencement of the war; and during its successful progress: but other circumstances combined with the exertions of the defensive alliance to induce Catharine to content herself, for the present, with Oczakow and its dependencies. Frederic William agreeably to the general objects of the confederacy, as well as his own particular interest, cultivated the friendship of Poland. Encouraged by their connection with this powerful prince, and beginning once more to conceive themselves of weight in the scale of Europe, reviving self-estimation re-kindled in the Poles that courage and patriotism, which though smothered, had not been extinguished; and thus once more they entertained hopes of freeing themselves from the thralldom in which they were held by the imperious Catharine. In 1788 and 1789, various efforts were made to establish the independent interest of Poland in the diet, and to overturn the power which Russia had assumed. A party of generous patriots stimulated their countrymen to emancipate themselves from a foreign yoke; the spirit of liberty was studiously diffused through all classes of the community; and in 1790 had risen very high. Its leading votaries saw, that the only method of securing the attachment and fidelity of the people to those who were projecting such alterations, was to accompany them with such benefits to the middling, and even to the inferior classes, as might deeply interest them in their support. But though desirous of changes, which would terminate the oppressive power of the great, the Poles were sincerely inclined to be satisfied

satisfied with a moderate degree of freedom ; and at present bounded their wishes to deliverance, from the personal thralldom in which, for so many ages, they had been tyrannically held. Conformably to this disposition, the popular leaders exerted their influence, with so much wisdom and prudence among the commons, that they made no claims but those that were strictly equitable and consistent with legal subordination. On these moderate principles of freedom, the people of Poland drew up an address to the diet, amounting to a declaration of rights. This representation, instead of recurring to the *natural rights of man*, antecedent to political establishment, considered *what was most expedient for the character and circumstances of the Polish people*. The constitution of Poland having been extremely defective in various constituents of liberty and security, the address in its claims, proposed such changes only as would remedy the defects, without subverting the existing orders. The nobles, clergy, and commons, should continue distinct, and the nobility retain their rank, dignity, and all the privileges which were compatible with public freedom ; they should only be deprived of the power of oppression and tyranny. The commons should not only be exempted from civil thralldom, but have all the political power that was consistent with the balance of the estates. Requisitions so discriminately moderate, tending to produce the balance of the parts, as well as the welfare of the whole, were most graciously received by the Polish nobility, who shewed themselves desirous of promoting a new system, conformable to the wishes of the people. The Polish patriots were

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wife, moderate, and patriotic efforts for that purpose.

eager

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eager to complete their reform, before Russia should be in a condition to give them any effectual interruption. Reports were spread and suspicions entertained, that there was a new partition in contemplation: the only way to prevent such a calamity and disgrace, was without delay to establish a system of polity, which should produce an union of the whole strength and energy of the Polish nation, resist the interference of foreigners in its domestic affairs, and preserve its natural independence and dignity. With these views the patriots formed a system, which had for its basis, the rights claimed in the address of the people; and they presented their plan to the diet at Warsaw. The new constitution proposed two objects; the external independence, and internal liberty of the nation. The Roman Catholic religion was to continue to be the national faith, with a toleration of every other which should peaceably submit to the established government. The clergy should retain their privileges and authority; the nobility their pre-eminence and prerogatives; the commons including the citizens and peasants, should participate of the general liberty; and the peasants were to be exempted from the predial servitude, under which they had so long groaned. Stipulations between the landholders and the peasants should be equally binding on both parties and on their respective successors, either by inheritance or acquisition: all property of every rank, order, or individual should be sacred, even from the encroachments of the supreme national power. To encourage the population of the country, all people, either strangers who should come to settle, or natives

natives who having emigrated should return to their country, might become citizens of Poland, on conforming to its laws. The constitution should be composed of three distinct powers, the legislative power in the states assembled; executive power in the king and council; and judicial power in the jurisdictions existing, or to be established. The crown was declared to be elective in point of families, but hereditary in the family which should be chosen. The proposed dynasty of future kings, was to begin with the Elector of Saxony, and to descend to his heirs. The king at his accession must engage to support the new constitution, and was to command the army, and preside in the legislature: the legislation was to be vested in two houses, the nobility and commons, meeting by their representatives; and the judicial power was to be vested in a gradation of courts, rising to one general and national tribunal. Such are the outlines* of the constitution of Poland, which appeared to steer a middle course between aristocratic tyranny, and democratic violence. It seemed well calculated to maintain internal liberty, encourage the industry of the great mass of the people, improve the immense advantages of their soil and situation, and invigorate their energy by the newly infused spirit of personal freedom; to confirm subordination of rank, which best guides the efforts of the people, and by diffusing harmony and force throughout the nation, to afford the disposition and means of maintaining the independence

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New constitution, an hereditary, mixed, and limited monarchy;

* See Otridge's Annual Register for 1791. Appendix to Chronicle, page 88.

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effected
without
bloodshed.

of Poland. There were members of the diet who not only opposed these proceedings, but drew up a protest against them in the form of a manifesto. Their conduct excited universal dissatisfaction, and though the moderation of the patriotic party offered no insult to their persons, yet the people could not forbear to view them with indignation. The king and the other leaders of the popular party were extremely vigilant in restraining every appearance of violence. Indeed a singular and happy circumstance of this revolution, was the peaceable manner in which it was effected : Poland attained the end which it proposed, without the loss of a single life. In framing this system, Stanislaus himself had displayed great ability : he had consulted the English and American constitutions, and with acute discrimination had selected such parts as were best adapted to the circumstances of Poland. The Polish patriots aware of the dispositions of Catharine, and apprehending other neighbouring states to regard the project with a jealous eye, urged the speedy adoption of the new constitution ; and they exerted themselves so strenuously, that on the 3d of May 1791, it was accepted by the estates, and all orders and classes of men, and ratified by suitable oaths, and inaugural solemnities.

Rage of
Catharine at
the eman-
cipation of
Poland;

The situation of Poland, freed from the Russian yoke, and rising to independence and respectability, galled the pride, and alarmed the ambition of Catharine; she was enraged, that the Poles, over whom she for many years had imperiously domineered, now asserted a right of managing their own affairs :

she

she saw in the power of Poland, if allowed to be confirmed, under her present constitution, a bar to the accomplishment of her vast projects : she was therefore eager to conclude the peace of Galatz, on terms less humiliating to the vanquished Ottoman, than from her successes she might have expected.

There were circumstances which afforded her hopes of not only resuming her dictation in Poland, but also rendering her power over that country more arbitrary than ever.

At the commencement of the French revolution, the other great powers of the continent were so much engaged in their own several projects, as not to bestow an adequate attention on the character and spirit of the Gallic proceedings. Spain was by far too feeble to entertain any hopes of interfering with effect in favour of fallen monarchy. The king of Sardinia afforded refuge to the exiled princes and nobility, but could supply no important aid. The refugee princes and their party, though anxiously eager to interest foreign powers in the cause of the privileged orders, yet during the year 1790, had little success ; but when Leopold had restored tranquillity in the Low Countries, after having concluded peace with Turkey, and being on terms of amity with the defensive alliance, he turned his attention* to the situation of France. Though moved by consanguinity, he was yet more deeply impressed by kingly sympathy : he considered the present ruling party in France as inimical to all monarchy, and holding up an example which he apprehended the

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she hopes to
crush the
new system
of Poland.

Impression
made by the
French re-
volution on
other coun-
tries ;

on sove-
reigns.

* See Annual Register 1791, ch. iv.

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Circular
letter of the
Emperor to
other
princes.

subjects of neighbouring sovereigns might imitate: and in these sentiments other princes of Germany coincided. Leopold however was aware of the danger which would attend speedy hostilities, unless he should have more effectual auxiliaries than the petty princes of the Germanic empire. His own resources were impaired by the war from which he had so recently extricated himself. France under her monarchical government had been always too powerful for the German empire; the present system would afford her additional energy. From these considerations so early as the spring of 1791, he endeavoured to interest other potentates in his objects; and with his own hand* wrote a letter to the Empress of Russia, the King of England, and the King of Prussia, also to the King of Spain, the States General, the Kings of Sardinia and Naples; proposing to form an union and concert of counsels and plans, for the purposes of asserting the honour and liberty of the king and royal family of France, and setting bounds to the dangerous excesses of the French revolution; to instruct their ministers at Paris to declare the concert which should be so formed; and recommend to the respective princes to support their declarations, by preparing a sufficient force. Should the French refuse to comply with the joint requisition of the crowned heads, the confederated powers would suspend all intercourse with France, collect a considerable army on the frontiers, and thereby compel the national assembly to raise and maintain a great military force at a heavy expence. The inter-

* Annual. Register as above.

ruption of trade, and general industry, would bring the people of France to more sober thoughts; and might tend to the evaporation of their present enthusiasm. On so great an undertaking, the Emperor could not venture alone; the concurrence of the other great powers, especially Prussia and Great Britain, was necessary to give efficacy to the project.

Whatever effect this application might have on the powers severally, to whom it was addressed, it did not succeed in producing the proposed concert. The principle of Britain manifested not only in her declarations, but uniform conduct, was that an internal change in the political system of any country did not justify the interference of neighbouring nations, unless that internal change led its votaries to aggression: that it did not belong to England to determine whether the government of France should be monarchical or republican; and that in changing her constitution, humbling her monarch, degrading her nobility, plundering her church, and even committing various acts of atrocity, in her own provinces or metropolis, she did no act which it belonged to Britain to avenge: she inflicted no injury on Britain. As impartial observers, Britons might individually censure French proceedings, as unwise, unjust, or impious; but the British nation neither possessed nor asserted a right of dictation to the French concerning the management of their own internal affairs, so long as their conduct did not produce aggression against this country.

While symptoms of enmity against the French revolution were manifesting themselves in some of the

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Equitable
and prudent
principle of
British
policy re-
specting
the French
revolution.

Paris—
ejectment
and banish-
ment of the

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1791.
clergy who
refused the
civic oath.

Progress of
confisca-
tion.

Forfeiture
of the es-
tates of
emigrants.

Abolition
of primo-
geniture.

the neighbouring countries, its votaries were proceeding in their career. With great expedition they ejected from their livings the refractory priests who would not swear contrary to their belief and conscience, and filled their places with more complaisant pastors, who were willing to submit to the powers that be; and in a few months there was a new set of spiritual teachers, most eagerly attached to the revolution to which they were indebted for their benefices. Besides this body of staunch auxiliaries, the national assembly, by robbing the church, procured another set of very active assistants in the holders of the assignments. These were, indeed, a kind of revolutionary pawn-brokers, who advanced money on plundered effects, and depended on the stability of the new system for payment. By the spiritual influence of the new priests, and the temporal influence of the new brokers, who consisted of great monied capitalists, the people became still more attached to the revolution, and its engine the national assembly. This body of legislators, finding confiscation so productive a source of revenue, deemed it unwise to confine it to the property of the church. A new fund they provided in the estates of the refugee princes and nobility*; and with their usual dispatch they passed a decree sequestering the principal estates, and threatening to confiscate them all if the proprietors did not immediately return. Farther to equalize property, they passed a decree abolishing primogeniture, and ordaining that the property of parents should be

* See proceedings of the national assembly.

equally,

equally divided among their children. But the national assembly now extended its system of confiscation to the properties of foreigners. Several German princes, secular and ecclesiastical, held great possessions in Alsace, by tenures repeatedly ratified under the most solemn treaties; and guaranteed by the great neighbouring powers. Yet these rights the national assembly overthrew by a mere act of lawless robbery*. This flagrant aggression on the rights of independent powers, not only excited the indignant resentment of the princes who were actually despoiled, but the displeasure and apprehensions of others. The confiscation of French property by the government was an invasion of the rights of French subjects. But the invasion of foreign property was a declaration of intended hostilities against all nations to which their plundering arms could reach. The emperor remonstrated on this violation of existing treaties, requiring compensation for the past, and security against future attacks on the rights of princes of the empire. The national assembly imputed this requisition to hostile intentions, and affirmed that there was a concert of foreign sovereigns, French princes, and aristocrats, to effect a counter revolution: Louis, they said, had acceded to this confederation, and was preparing to escape from France.

The emperor remonstrates against this violation of national engagements.

His majesty at Easter had taken the sacrament from the hands of a refractory† priest, and had thereby given great offence and alarm to the Parisians. It was also remarked that he had recently

* See proceedings of the national assembly.

† Those clergymen who would not take the prescribed oath were, by the revolutionists, styled refractory priests.

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Proposed
jaunt of
the king to
St. Cloud,
is prevented
by the
populace.

Memorial
of Louis
delivered
to foreign
powers.

promoted officers inimical to the revolution. On the 18th of April, being Easter monday, his majesty and family intended to repair to St. Cloud, a palace about three miles from the city, there to spend the holidays. In the morning, as the family was stepping into their coaches, an immense crowd surrounding the carriages, refused to suffer them to proceed, and insisted that they should remain at Paris. The national guards, joining the multitude, exclaimed that the king should not be suffered to depart; and the sovereign found it necessary to comply with the requisition of the populace. After several discussions, the Parisians represented their apprehension of dangers assailing them from various quarters, and especially the king's intimate counsellors. His majesty, to gratify the populace, dismissed various royalists from their places at court, and employed other means to remove the popular dissatisfaction. One step which he took for this purpose, was to send a memorial to the French ministers in foreign countries, with orders to deliver a copy at each court where they respectively resided. This document recapitulated the events which preceded and followed the revolution, and described that great change as having importantly improved the condition both of the monarch and the people. It extolled the new constitution, reprobated the efforts, employed to overthrow that beneficial fabric, most clearly and unequivocally expressed the royal approbation of the present system, and declared that the assertions of those Frenchmen in foreign parts, who complained that he was obliged to disguise his sentiments, were unfounded in truth. This dispatch being

being communicated on the 23d of April to the national assembly, was received with the loudest applause, and ordered to be posted up in the most conspicuous places of every municipality in the kingdom, to be read at the head of every regiment and company in the army, and on board of every ship in the navy. For several weeks the greatest harmony appeared to prevail between the king and the assembly. Meanwhile the royalists, without being dismayed by the power of the revolutionists, expressed their sentiments with an asperity, which increased the more that in oppression, they saw the injustice of the predominant principles, and felt the misery of their effects. Attachment however to the king's person and family deterred them from measures which they had reason to conclude, would endanger his safety; should they make any decisive movement towards a counter revolution, they did not doubt, a massacre of the royal captives, would be the sacrifice to popular fury. The deliverance of their majesties and the family from a state of real captivity, by whatever name it might be called, would enable them to begin their attempts without hazarding the royal safety. They believed that the majority of the nation secretly cherished the same sentiments with themselves, and would readily co-operate in attempting the restoration of royalty, when they saw hopes of support and success. Under this conviction, his majesty's friends employed their utmost dexterity to effect his escape from Paris. The enterprize appeared arduous, but not impracticable; his majesty was accompanied by a national guard, and also by a Swiss guard; the latter corps was warmly

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judicial examination; and to manifest their sentiments respecting kings, quoted the trial of Charles I. of England. A deputation of three members was appointed to receive the king's deposition: his majesty refused to answer any interrogatories, but avowed his willingness to make known the motives for his late departure. His intention (he said) was not to leave the kingdom, but to repair to Montmedi, a fortified town on the frontiers, where his personal liberty would be secure, and his public conduct under no restraint; and where he could have transacted business, together with the assembly, without the imputation of force. He did not object to the constitution, but only to the small degree of liberty allowed to himself, which so impaired the sanction of his voice, as to give it the appearance of compulsion. A memorial which he left at his departure, more fully detailed the various grounds of his dissatisfaction with the national assembly; recapitulated their various acts, and very ably exposed the despotic usurpation of the revolutionary party. The assembly answered this memorial by a manifesto which was intended to prove that their conduct had been directed by regard to the public good, that its effect was internal prosperity, and a strength that would resist every attempt at a counter-revolution. From the unsuccessful effort of the king to escape from thralldom, the republicans derived a great accession of strength. They, however, thought it prudent to assume in the assembly the appearance of moderation, while their emissaries and associates in the clubs were occupied in increasing among the people the prevailing hatred of

of monarchy. No faith could be reposed, they affirmed, in the king or any of his adherents, who were all plotting a counter-revolution. Under pretence of guarding against the designs of the royalists, the assembly assumed the organization of the army, and, indeed, the chief part of the executive power, which, at the confederation, they and the people had sworn to leave in the hands of the king. The monarchical party now adopted a system of open, resolute, and vigorous opposition, which, if chosen at a less advanced stage, might have saved their country from the despotism of paramount democracy. They declared that they never would relinquish the defence of the monarchy: no less than two hundred and eighty joined in a bold and explicit protest against the decrees by which the assembly acted independently of the crown; but now their firm boldness was too late. The national assembly, to guard against foreign invasion, gave directions for fortifying the frontiers. Meanwhile they proceeded with the constitutional code; and the king's late attempt caused the insertion of several articles which had not been before proposed. It was decreed by a great majority, that a king putting himself at the head of an armed force, hostile to the state, should be considered as having abdicated the crown. The same penalty was denounced against him were he to retract his oath of fidelity to the constitution, or incur the guilt of conspiracy against it by a criminal correspondence with the enemies of the nation. It was farther decreed, that after such abdication he should be treated as a simple citizen, and subjected, like all other individuals, to the common

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The monarchical party adopt a vigorous system, but too late.

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State of
parties

course of law. There was a very warm debate about the inviolability of the king's person. At this time there were four parties in the national assembly, and throughout the French empire: the royalists, whose object was the restoration of the monarchy in its former power and splendor; the moderates, who wished a mixed kingly government, consisting of different estates, uniting security and liberty with social order, and subordination: the third was the constitutionalists, the supporters of the existing polity, which, levelling all ranks and distinctions of subjects, still retained the name of king, and were by far the most numerous: fourthly, the republicans, who were gaining ground in number and strength. The royalists and moderates were eager for the inviolability of the royal person; the constitutionalists were divided; the republicans were strenuously inimical to the proposition: but after a long and animated contest, perceiving that by persisting in their opposition in this point they would lose the support of many constitutionalists, in order to conciliate the different parties, they proposed certain provisional modifications to accompany the inviolability of the royal person. Their opponents thought it expedient to accede to a compromise; and it was accordingly decreed, that the king's person, with certain restrictions and limitations, should be inviolable. A decree was passed, intrusting the education of the dauphin to a governor appointed by the national assembly, in order to form him to constitutional principles. The moderate party endeavoured again to introduce two separate chambers, and enlarged on the blessings of the

British

Inviolability of the king's person, carried in the assembly.

British constitution, but their propositions were rejected. The constitutional code being finished, sixty members were appointed to present it to the king: these waited on his majesty with great solemnity, and were very graciously received. When they presented the code, he informed them, that the importance of the subject required his most attentive and serious examination; and that as soon as he had acquitted himself of this duty, he would apprize the assembly of his intentions. The violent republicans hoped that the king would refuse the constitution, and thereby justify a different system. The king and his friends were well informed of their wishes and schemes: the people in general, however, were not yet disposed to establish a commonwealth, and the greater number of them were most strenuous constitutionalists. His friends, aware of the designs of the republicans, advised the king to accept the constitutional code. Being prevailed upon, he, on the 13th of September, wrote a letter announcing his acceptance, and declaring the motives of his former, recent, and present conduct. The following day, repairing to the national assembly, he verbally declared his acceptance of the constitution; and in presence of the assembly, signed his declaration. He was received with great respect, and attended by the whole assembly on his return to the Tuilleries, amidst the acclamations of all Paris. On the 28th of September the constitution was formally proclaimed at Paris. The substance of the proclamation was, that the important work of the constitution being at length perfected by the assembly, and accepted by the king, it was now entrusted to the

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The king's friends advise him to accept the constitutional code.

He accepts it in the national assembly.

* See State Papers, September 13th, 1791.

protection

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Honours
paid to infidel
philosophers.

protection of the legislature, the crown, and the law; to the affection and fidelity of fathers of families, wives, and mothers; to the zeal and attachment of the young citizens, and to the spirit of the French nation*. While the assembly had been thus engaged in completing the new constitutional code, it bestowed the highest honours on the memory of those revolutionizing philosophers who had contributed so powerfully to the change. As Voltaire had been so efficacious an enemy to christianity and the church, the assembly conferred signal honours on his remains, which they ordered to be transported from his burial place, and deposited in the church of St. Genevive, the place appointed for receiving the ashes, and perpetuating the memory, of those who had deserved well of the French nation. Equal honours were decreed to Rousseau: he had been the object of almost constant persecution by priests and their votaries. France, that had now dispelled the clouds of superstition, and broken the fetters of tyranny, after having profited so much by his labours, ought to pay that veneration to his memory when dead, which ignorance and superstition had denied to him while he was alive. The public joined with the assembly in doing homage to the characters of these writers, and also to Helvetius and others, who had distinguished themselves by their exertions against christianity. To gratify the prevailing sentiment, the theatres were, as usual, accommodated: plays were represented in which infidel writers and doctrines were held up to admiration: religion, and the various establishments and orders by which it had been maintained, were exposed to ridicule.

* See State Papers, September 28th, 1791.

cule and contempt. That they might contribute as much as possible to the perpetuation of their system, the revolutionists endeavoured to instil such sentiments concerning the relations of domestic and private life, as would best correspond with their political establishments *.

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Amidst the many plans for regenerating France, there was one evil which ingenuity could not remedy, this was the scarcity of money. Notwithstanding the immense forfeitures, there was still a great deficiency of income compared with expenditure. The army required to support the new liberty was more numerous, and much more expensive, than the armies of the old monarchy had been at the most extravagant periods. The populace considered exemption from taxes as one of the sacred rights which they ought to enjoy, and therefore paid very sparingly and reluctantly. The boldest and most ardent champions of religious, moral, civil, and political regeneration, neglected no opportunity of committing theft. The assembly had declared that all property belonged to the state: from this comprehensive theorem they deduced a corollary †, that whatever was thus acquired by the state belonged to any lawgiver or statesman that could get it into his possession. Though these speculators publicly celebrated the credit of the national paper, in their own accumulations they gave the preference to gold and silver. Many other monied men who had amassed their riches by fair means, being doubtful

Want of
money.

* See Burke's Letter to a Member of the National Assembly.

† See Playfair's history of Jacobinism.

concerning

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Inspection
of accounts.

concerning the stability of the new government, hoarded the greater part of their cash. All who were disaffected to the revolutionary system, to discourage assignats as well as to secure their own property, concealed as much as possible their gold and silver. A great part of the hidden treasures was lodged in foreign countries, especially the British funds, which even the French patriots practically acknowledged to afford the best security for property *. As silver and gold disappeared, the paper money was proportionably depreciated; and great pecuniary distress prevailed. The indigent now became a more numerous body than ever, and made desperate through want, broke into every recess where they thought money was hoarded, and exercised their depredations with such dexterity, that numbers of individuals lost immense sums, notwithstanding the carefulness and extraordinary precautions with which they had been concealed *. As a considerable part of pecuniary distress was imputed to the administrators of the revenue who were the most zealous members of the popular party, the aristocrats very minutely investigated and severely scrutinized their conduct; and when the accounts were presented for inspection, declared openly, that they conceived them false, and the documents and vouchers by which they were supported fabricated for the pur-

* So great was the influx of French money into England during the year 1791, that whereas seventy-five had been the average price of the consolidated annuities of three *per cent.* during the five preceding years of peace and prosperity, from midsummer 1791 the average price was about eighty-eight.

* See Playfair on Jacobinism.

pose

pose of covering fraud and depredation. The arguments and statements were very strong and clear, but the assembly overthrew arithmetical results by a majority of votes ; and *so far* the patriots were cleared from the charges. The purgation of these patriotic financiers was the last important act of the national assembly : on the 30th of September 1791, this body was dissolved by a speech from the king, in which he solemnly repeated his promises to maintain the constitution.

Thus terminated the first national assembly of France, which in little more than two years had effected a more complete change in the government, ranks, orders, laws, religion, doctrines, opinions, sentiments, and manners of the people, than any legislative body ever before effected in a series of ages. It found an absolute monarchy ; left an uncon-
trouled popular legislature, with a king nominally limited, actually subdued. It found the laws, which emanating from the Roman code, and intermingled with the feudal institutions, had spread over the greater part of Europe, and subsisted in France for twelve centuries ; it left a new code, which originated in a metaphysical fiction of universal equality ; vindicated to man, when member of a community, all the rights which might belong to him in a state of separation from his fellow men, and applied to a constituted society principles that presuppose no society to exist. It found disparity of rank, a political result from inequality of ability and character, extending itself to descendants : it left all rank and eminence levelled with meanness and obscurity ; seeing that in the progress of hereditary transmission there might be

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Dissolution
of the na-
tional as-
sembly.

Revision of
the princ-
pal changes
effected by
this body.

How it
found and
left France.

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1794.

In all its
excesses it
manifested
the genius
and energy
of the
French
character.

be degeneracy, instead of correcting the abuse, it abolished the establishment. It took away one of the strongest incentives to splendid and beneficial actions, in the desire of a parent to acquire, maintain, or extend, honour or dignity, which he may not only enjoy himself, but transmit to his children. It found the people, though turbulent, and reluctantly submitting to arbitrary power, well inclined to a free system, which should include order and subordination. Expelling monarchical despotism, instead of stopping at the middle stage, which wisdom dictated, it carried the people to the opposite extreme of democratic anarchy. Impressing the multitude with an opinion that the general will was the sole rule of government, it induced them to suppose that their wills jointly and individually were to be exempt from restraint; and that the subjection of passion to the controul of reason and virtue, was an infringement of liberty. It found property secure, and left arbitrary confiscation predominant. It found the people christians; left them infidels. But whatever opinion impartial posterity may entertain of this legislative body, either in the revolution which they effected, or the new system which they established, it must be admitted that uncommon ingenuity, skill, vigour, and perseverance, were displayed in the means adopted to give to the projected changes the desired effect. Their great and fundamental principle was, to revolutionize the minds of their countrymen, as the only sure means of civil and political revolution. In the clubs, the populace, and the army, modelled by their pleasure, they formed most effectual instruments for carrying their

their schemes into execution, and rendering their will the paramount law. The first national assembly manifested ability and genius, which, unfortunately for their country, were neither guided by wisdom nor prompted by virtue.

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The revolutionary leaders did not confine their efforts to their own country. They employed emissaries in other nations to disseminate their principles and co-operate with champions in the same cause. A spirit of political enthusiasm had, indeed, been spread through a great part of Europe. In Germany, and particularly in the Prussian dominions, a set arose, though under different denominations, who, ascribing the greater part of human calamities to bigotry, superstition, arbitrary power, and error, endeavoured to awaken their cotemporaries to the most animated hopes, of the advantages that were to flow from political improvement, philosophical education, and, in all things, a vigorous exercise of reason. They professed, at the same time, the warmest sentiments of humanity, and a spirit of universal philanthropy. In Britain, as we have seen, the leading doctrines of the French revolution were maintained from various causes, and to different extents, by numbers of writers, more especially by those of the unitarian dissenters. In the beginning of this year Dr. Priestley employed his rapid and indefatigable pen in answering Mr. Burke. After repeating his usual arguments against the existing establishments, the doctor confined himself to a prophetic vision of the manifold blessings which *were to flow* through the world from the glorious French revolution. This event was to diffuse liberty, to meliorate society, and to increase *virtue and happiness.*

Progress of
political en-
thusiasm.

Britain.

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—1791.
Certain
ingenious
visionaries
expect a po-
litical mil-
lennium.

Thomas
Paine.

Rights of
Man—
dexterous
adaptation
of to the
sentiments
and passions
of the vul-
gar.

pinests. A political millennium was about to be established, when men should be governed by the purity of their own minds, and the moderation of their own desires, without external coercion, when no authority should exist but that of reason, and no legislators but philosophers, and disseminators of truth. But a work soon after made its appearance, which, however little entitled to historical record for its own intrinsic merits, is well worthy of mention, as the cause of very important and alarming effects; this was a treatise entitled, *The rights of man*, by Thomas Paine; already mentioned as the author of a violent pamphlet written to prevent re-union between Britain and her colonies. Paine having gone to Paris soon after the commencement of the revolution, and thoroughly imbibed its doctrines and sentiments, undertook to induce the English to copy so glorious a model. Perhaps, indeed, there never was a writer who more completely attained the art of imposing and impressing nonsense on ignorant and undistinguishing minds, as sense and sound reasoning; more fitted for playing on the passions of the vulgar; for gaining their affections by gratifying their prejudices, and through those affections procuring their assent to any assertions which he chose to advance. His manner was peculiarly calculated to impress and effect such objects. The coarse familiarity of his language was in unison with vulgar taste; the directness of his efforts and boldness of his assertions passed with ignorance for the confidence of undoubted truth. It was not only the manner of his communication, but the substance of his doctrine, that was peculiarly pleas-
ing

ing to the lower ranks. Vanity, pride, and ambition, are passions which exist with as much force in the tap-room of an ale-house as in a senate. When peasants, labourers, and journeymen mechanics, were told that they were as fit for governing the country as any man in parliament, it was a very pleasing idea; it gave an agreeable swell to their self-importance: when farther informed, that they were not only qualified for such high appointments, but also, if they exerted themselves that they were within the reach, they were still more delighted. Through a book so popular, very great additions were made to the English admirers of the French revolution. Societies and clubs, in imitation of the French Jacobins, fast increasing in number and divisions, testified the highest approbation of Paine's *Rights of Man*; and very industriously, through their affiliations, spread cheap editions of it among the common people, in all parts of the kingdom.

On the 14th of July a party of the admirers of the French revolution met at Birmingham to commemorate its commencement, under the auspices of its great champion Dr. Priestley. Previous to the meeting, a hand-bill * was circulated outrageously seditious, stigmatizing all the established orders, and urging insurrection against church and state. As the majority of the inhabitants were warmly attached to the constitution, this mischievous production excited very great alarm and rage. The celebrators having assembled, the populace surrounded the tavern where they were met; and as Dr. Priestley had so

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Astonishing popularity of among the lower ranks.

Commemoration of the French revolution at Birmingham.

* See Gentleman's Magazine for July 1791, and Chronicle of Annual Register for the same month.

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Riots.

Destruction
of Dr.
Priestley's
library.The doc-
tor's con-
duct.

often and openly avowed his enmity to the church, they very unfortunately supposed that the present paper, dooming our establishment to destruction, was composed and dispersed by him and his votaries. Under this apprehension they became extremely riotous, burnt one of the conventicles, destroyed several private houses, and, among the rest, the library of Dr. Priestley, containing a most valuable apparatus for philosophical experiments, and also many manuscripts. The tumults raged for two days so violently that the civil magistrates were inadequate to their suppression. A military force arriving the third day, dispersed the mob; and the magistrates, thus assisted, re-established tranquillity. All friends to our king and constitution sincerely regretted these lawless proceedings, though evidently originating in a zealous attachment to our establishment. Men of science lamented the destruction of Dr. Priestley's library, of his collection, machinery, and compositions on physical subjects, *in which department* the exertions of his talents and learning were supremely valuable.

The conduct of Dr. Priestley himself upon this occasion, though it could not diminish the public abhorrence of such outrageous violence, by no means increased sympathy in the sufferings of its principal object. Hastening to London, he wrote an address to the inhabitants of Birmingham, in which, though he justly exposed the lawless disorder of the insurgents, and naturally complained of the mischiefs that they had perpetrated, yet the main scope of his letter was to attack the church, and impute the riots to its principal supporters in the vicinity. The tumultuous

excesses

excesses he illogically and falsely ascribed to the badness of the cause ; as if the intrinsic merits of any system could be lessened by the madness or folly of its defenders. Various addresses of condolence sent to Dr. Priestley by societies of dissenters, and other clubs, very clearly demonstrated the sanguine hopes of the writers, that the downfall of our establishments was approaching. Mr. Benjamin Cooper, secretary of the revolution society, hoped that the church which he (Mr. Benjamin Cooper) pronounced *an ignorant and interested intolerance*, was near its end. Dr. Priestley's reply chimed with this Mr. Benjamin Cooper's tune. The young students at Hackney college, expressed their conviction of the folly of existing establishments. Priestley's answer* to their letter may be considered as a *recitation of his political creed*. The hierarchy (he said) equally the bane of christianity and of rational liberty, was about to fall : he exhorted these young men strenuously to use their efforts in so glorious a cause, and to shew by the *ardor* and *force* of their exertions against the constituted authorities, how much more *enlightened* understandings, and liberal sentiments were formed by the plan and instructions of their academy, than those that were imbibed in national institutions, fettering and depressing the mind. The doctrines so earnestly inculcated by Priestley and his class of enemies to our establishments, tended to promote the success of Paine's political lessons. Priestley was more fitted for forming visionary and sophistical speculatists among men of superficial literature,

* See Gentleman's Magazine, for November 1791, p. 1024, and Annual Register, 1791. Appendix to Chronicle, p. 86.

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Comparison
between
Priestley
and Paine.

Rapid and
extensive
diffusion of
democratic
principles.

Wide diffu-
sion of
superficial
literature,

whereas Paine was best qualified for effecting a change on the vulgar and ignorant. Priestley dealt chiefly in prescription; his nostrum to be applied to every case was *alterative*: Paine was operational and proposed *immediate incision*. From Priestley proceeded such philosophers as Godwin and Holcroft, from Paine such practical reformers as Watt and Thelwall. Priestley, to use his own words, had laid the train, Paine's desire was to light the match. Republican, and even democratic principles, continued to make a rapid progress during the remainder of the year. It would be extremely unjust and illiberal to impute to Unitarian dissenters indiscriminately, the principles and intentions so obvious in the heresiarch. It is however well known, that if not all, very many of that class of dissenters were at this time inimical to the British constitution of church and state. Besides the dissenters, there were other sets of men who regarded the French revolution as a model for imitation. From causes purely political, without any mixture of theology, some of the votaries of a change in parliament, and other departments of the state, conceived the diffusion of French principles highly favourable to their plans of reform. In the metropolis, besides men of genius and learning, well affected to the French revolution, there was another set of adventurers in literature and politics, very eager in maintaining and spreading its doctrines. If learning be not more profound in the present than in former ages, it is certainly spread over a much wider surface. The commercial opulence of the country encourages the manufacture and sale of literary commodities of every

every value and denomination. The demand extending to a vast variety of productions, which require neither deep learning nor vigorous genius, the number of authors multiplies in proportion to the moderate qualifications that are necessary. All these, down to translators of German novels, and collectors of paragraphs for the daily papers, deem themselves *persons of genius and erudition, and members of the republic of letters*. In France, literary men possessed great direction; many of this class in England conceived, that if the same system were established here, they might rise to be directors in the new order of things. There were in the literary class, as in other bodies, persons who, from a benevolent enthusiasm, hoped that the French constitution would extirpate vice and misery, and diffuse over the world philanthropy and happiness. Among the literary producers, there was one set who thought the highest perfection of the human character was sensibility; and that the restraints of religious and moral precepts, as well as of political establishments, were harsh and tyrannical, because they so often contradicted the impulse of sentimental feeling; these praised the French revolution in the belief that it was inimical to austere restrictions. Under this class were to be ranked various female votaries of literature, and at their head Mary Ann Wollstonecraft, who produced, as a counterpart to the Rights of Man, a performance entitled the Rights of Woman; vindicating to the sex an exemption from various restrictions to which women had been hitherto subjected from the tyranny and aristocracy of men; but first and principally from the restraint

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favourable
to revolution-
ary
notions.

Mary Ann
Wollstone-
craft.

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Debating
societies.

of chastity ; and claiming the free and full indulgence of every gratification which fancy could suggest, or passion stimulate. Besides these classes, there was a great and multiplying variety of clubs for political discussion and debate. To these resorted many mechanics, tradesmen, and others, from a desire extremely prevalent among the lower English, of distinguishing themselves as *spokesmen*. By degrees, from hearing speeches and reading pamphlets, they supposed themselves politicians and philosophers, and thought it incumbent on so enlightened men, to drop the prejudices of education ; and sacrificed religion, patriotism, and loyalty, at the shrine of vanity. From so many causes, and through so many agents, the revolutionary doctrines were disseminated very widely. To facilitate circulation, opulent votaries published cheap editions of the most inflammatory works, especially Paine's *Rights of Man*, which contained the essence of all the rest.

Cheap
editions
of Tom
Paine's
works.

But men of high rank, and of the highest ability and character, still admired the French revolution as likely to produce, when corrected by time and experience, the extension of moderate and rational liberty ; and besides Dr. Priestley, a few others of eminent genius celebrated the French changes, in literary works. Of these, by far the most distinguished production that appeared in England in vindication of the French revolution, was Mr. Mackintosh's answer to Mr. Burke. The obvious purpose of this learned and philosophical writer is the melioration of the condition of man ; convinced that men habitually guided by reason, and deter-

One able
and pro-
found work
in favour
of the
French
revolution.

mined

mined by virtue, would be happier under small than considerable restraints, he proposed a controul too feeble for the actual state of men now existing; much more of a people whose national character, from the old despotism, and other causes, required a greater degree of controul than some of their neighbours. The erroneous conclusions of this forcible and profound writer, appear to have arisen from two sources; first he argued from a supposition of an attainable perfection in the human character, instead of an accurate estimate of the degree of perfection which it had actually attained. Secondly, he appears to have been misinformed concerning the principles, spirit, and character of the French revolutionists.

Great and important as the progressions of public opinions were in 1791, to arrest the attention of the philosophical observer, the actual events in England to employ the pen of the annalist, were not numerous. His highness the Duke of York, in the close of the year 1791, married the eldest Princess of Prussia, between whom and the English prince a mutual affection had subsisted ever since the royal youth's residence at the court of Berlin. The arrival of the fair stranger, the many festivities that ensued on so auspicious an occasion, and the appearance of the new married couple in public, agreeably relieved the political discussions which had long absorbed the attention of the public.

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Vindiciae
Gallicae.

Marriage of
the Duke
of York
to the
Princess of
Prussia.

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*Meeting of Parliament.—Opposition censure the conduct of ministry respecting Russia.—Incidental but interesting debates about the French revolution.—Real difference between Messrs. Burke and Fox.—Motion of Mr. Whitbread respecting the riots at Birmingham.—Petition of the Unitarian dissenters—rejected.—Multiplication of political clubs.—Society of the friends of the people—rank, character, and property of the members.—Mr. Grey.—The Earl of Lauderdale.—Address of the society to the people of Great Britain.—Intention good, but tendency dangerous.—Mr. Pitt opposes this engine of change.—Rise and progress of corresponding societies.—Second part of Thomas Paine's Rights of man.—Ferment among the populace.—The lower classes become politicians and statesmen.—Proclamation against seditious writings—discussed in parliament.—Schism among the members of opposition.—The heir apparent testifies his zeal for supporting the British constitution.—General satisfaction from the manifestation of the prince's sentiments.—Bill for the amendment of the London police.—Humane and discriminate propositions of Lord Rawdon for the relief of debtors and benefit of creditors.—Abolition of the slave trade is carried in the house of Commons.—Subject discussed in the house of Lords.—Duke of Clarence opposes the abolition.—His highness exhibits a masterly view of the various arguments.—The question postponed.—State of the crown lands—especially forests.—Mr. Pitt's bill for enclosing parts of the New Forest—disapproved—rejected by the peers.—Mr. Dundas's bill for facilitating the payment of wages and prize money to sailors—passed.—Finances.—Prosperous state of commerce and revenue.—Prospect of farther reducing the debt, and diminishing
the*

the taxes.—Flourishing state of India finances.—Political state and transactions in India.—Beneficial effects of Mr. Pitt's legislative measures, and Mr. Dundas's executive management.—Sir John Macpherson, governor general.—Able and successful administration—succeeded by Lord Cornwallis.—Wise plans of comprehensive improvement.—Tippoo Saib recruits his strength.—His ambitious projects revive—attacks our ally the Rajah of Travancore.—The British council remonstrates to no purpose.—The English armies invade Mysore from the East and West coasts.—Campaign of 1790—indecisive.—1791 Lord Cornwallis himself takes the field—reduces the greater part of Mysore—comes within sight of Seringapatam—prevented by the overflow of the Cavery from investing the metropolis of Mysore.—In 1792 besieges Seringapatam.—Tippoo Saib sues for peace, and obtains it at the dictation of Lord Cornwallis.—Generous conduct of his Lordship respecting the prize money.—Measures for the improvement of British India.

PARLIAMENT met January 31st, 1792. His Majesty's speech mentioned the marriage of his son, and the peace concluded between Russia and Turkey; but dwelt chiefly on the rapidly increasing prosperity of the British nation, which must confirm steady and zealous attachment to a constitution that we have found, from long experience, to unite the inestimable blessings of liberty and order; and to which, under the favour of Providence, all our advantages are principally to be ascribed. Members of opposition arraigned the conduct of ministers concerning Russia. Both the accusation and defence necessarily repeated former arguments. The British government thought interference necessary for the balance of power; and though they had sacrificed their own counsels to the voice of the public, the armament

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Incidental
but interest-
ing debates
about the
French
revolution.

armament prepared upon that occasion had not been useless, as it had prevented the Turks from being obliged to make such concessions as would have been otherwise extorted *. Mr. Fox, conceiving himself, and those who coincided in his sentiments respecting the French revolution, indirectly censured by the praises of the British polity, clearly and forcibly demonstrated the compatibility of satisfaction at the downfall of French despotism, so inimical to human rights, and destructive to human happiness, with the highest veneration and warmest attachment to the British constitution, the preserver of rights, and promoters of happiness. He rejoiced at the overthrow of the French despotism because it was bad, but would use every effort to support the British constitution because it was good. In subsequent discussions Mr. Fox, more explicitly than ever, exhibited to the house his sentiments and views on this momentous subject. The French, with characters formed by the old despotism, now emancipated from slavery, are actuated by a most impetuous enthusiasm, which drives them, as it has driven every other votary, to violent excesses. But enthusiasm, like every ardent passion, must, as knowledge of human nature and history inform us, ere long subside. It is illogical to impute to the principles of the French revolution the excesses which really arise from a sublimated state of passion that cannot last. Enthusiasm accompanied the reformation; enthusiasm marked the efforts of the puritans, which vindicated British liberty from kingly and priestly tyranny. But the free principles and beneficial establishments subsist many ages after the passion subsided. Do not therefore pro-

* See Parliamentary Debates January 31st, 1792.

scribe the French revolution because a fury that must be temporary has inspired many of its votaries. Let the noxious fumes evaporate, you will retain the genuine spirit of liberty salutary to mankind. Such was the opinion of one personage, not less profound as a political philosopher than forcible as an orator, decisive and energetic as a statesman. Many and various in detail as were the subjects of difference between him and Mr. Burke upon French affairs, the principle was simple. Fox esteemed the outrages incidental effects of an enthusiasm which must be temporary, and which formed no part of the essential character of the revolution : Burke reckoned the excesses necessary and essential parts of the revolution, which legitimately descended from its nature and principles ; and increased as they advanced, and which could never cease to operate until the revolutionary system ceased to exist. Fox thought the French to be men in the ardent pursuit of what was good, and transported by passion beyond the bounds of moderation and wisdom ; as men pursuing what was really good have often been transported : Burke considered the whole nation as actuated by a spirit of diabolism, eagerly bent on perpetrating all possible mischief ; a phenomenon never before known in the history of mankind ; and therefore, if true in that particular case, requiring, from its contravention to probability, the stronger evidence. From the opposite theories which they formed as political philosophers, these illustrious men deduced very opposite practical systems, which they recommended as statesmen. Burke very early* re-

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Real difference between Messrs. Burke and Fox.

* See his Hints for a memorial to be delivered to the French Ambassador ; and Thoughts on French affairs, both written in 1791.

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*Motion of
Mr. Whit-
bread re-
specting the
riots at Bir-
mingham.*

commended and inculcated a confederacy, which, upon his hypothesis, was not only wise, but absolutely necessary. If the French were devils incarnate, to prevent the diabolical spirit from operation, neighbouring nations must overwhelm the power of beings so possessed, or perish themselves from the frenzy. Fox, not regarding them as a multitude of dæmons, but as the votaries of enthusiasm, recommended to encourage their spirit of liberty, and suffer their passions to subside through time, the surest corrector. Hostile interference in their internal concerns, would support instead of extinguishing their enthusiasm, turn its efforts to external defence, and give them an energy that would prove fatal to those who had roused it into action. These were the leading diversities in the theoretical and practical systems of Messrs. Fox and Burke, which account for the whole series of their respective counsels and conduct concerning France. Ministers still avoided the delivery of opinions on events and systems which had not interfered with the interest of Great Britain. Though the French revolution was never directly before the house, yet many of its proceedings arose from questions of liberty and reform which that great event was instrumental in suggesting. Mr. Whitbread, a new member, of good talents, respectable character, and immense fortune, who had joined the party of Mr. Fox, reviewing the riots at Birmingham, imputed these outrages to the encouragement given by government to persecutors of the dissenters, because they were inimical to civil and ecclesiastical tyranny. The magistrates were not sufficiently active; the government had been dilatory in sending troops; and several rioters had been

been acquitted : some, after being condemned, were pardoned. Mr. Dundas, now secretary of state, said, that on enquiry by the attorney-general, there appeared no grounds for censuring the magistrates. From a detail of dates, and military stations, he proved that no time had been lost in dispatching troops to Birmingham. The rioters pardoned, had experienced the royal mercy on the recommendation of the judges.

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The Scotch episcopalians perceiving a disposition in parliament to extend toleration as far as political security would admit, petitioned for a more ample and unrestrained indulgence, than that which they had hitherto enjoyed. The former motives for laying them under legal discouragements, subsisted no longer : the house of Stuart, to which their attachment was known, was extinct ; and their fidelity to the actual government was not liable, on that account, to be suspected. A petition for exemption from restraints, the reasons of which no longer existed, was favourably received by a legislature at once indulgent and discriminating. A bill was accordingly introduced into the house of lords, and passed both houses. The Unitarians alleging this law as a precedent, applied for a repeal of the penal statutes ; and in addition to the usual reasons for refusing their application, their recent practices were stated as inimical to church and state, especially their active dissemination of Paine's works, and other democratical performances, and their formation of political clubs and societies.

Petition
of the Uni-
tarian dis-
senters,

rejected.

While various subjects of alleged defect, or projected amendment, either in measures of government,

Multiplica-
tion of poli-
tical clubs.

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Society of
the friends
of the
people,

or the existing laws were agitated, a project was formed by a society of gentlemen, for making an important change in the composition of the legislature; this association, consisting of men eminent for talents, for character, for political, literary, and professional ability; for landed and mercantile property, for rank and importance in the community, took to themselves the name of the *Friends of the people*. The following were the general objects which they professed to seek:—To restore the freedom of election, and to secure to the people a more frequent exercise of their right of electing their representatives. For the purpose of these reforms in parliament and the country, they instituted their society, but though determined to promote them, resolved to confine their pursuit rigorously to such means, as should be consistent with the existing constitution. A short declaration of these objects and means, was framed by a committee, and signed by the society, with an address to the people of England tending to prove; first, that reform was wanted; secondly, that the present, a season of peace and prosperity, was the best fitted for commencing and establishing that reform; and that if there existed some degree of discontent, the proposed reform was well fitted for its removal: that the projected means were calculated to promote the good without incurring any danger; thirdly, the objection arising from recent events in France, could not apply to a case so very different, as the British constitution, with some abuses, was from the old despotism of France. The object of the society was to recover and preserve the true balance of the constitution. They announced the

the determination of the society, to move a reform in parliament early the ensuing session. On these avowed principles of their union, they looked with confidence for the co-operation of the British nation: these are the outlines of an address which may be considered as the manifesto of the *only* respectable body, which, since the commencement of the French revolution, undertook the cause of parliamentary reform. The society included the greater number of eminent oppositionists in the house of commons with one member of the house of lords: This was James Earl of Lauderdale, a nobleman of very considerable abilities, and deeply conversant in moral and political philosophy and history, who had distinguished himself, first as Lord Maitland in the house of commons, and afterwards made a no less conspicuous figure in the house of peers. Mr. Grey was appointed to take the leading part for the society in the house of commons. Mr. Grey had been educated an English whig, and considered the opposition party as the supporters of whig principles; and in his present measure conceived himself paving the way for a truly whig parliament. The rank and fortune of this peer and commoner, independent of their respective characters, and also the talents, character, and situation of other members, afford very satisfactory grounds for believing them actuated by constitutional motives. It is indeed not impossible to suppose, that subordinate to patriotism mere anti-ministerial considerations might have some weight, and that, as Mr. Pitt had once been the advocate of reform, and was not likely to be so in the present circumstances, they might hope to reduce him to some embarrassment, and expose him to the charge

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rank, character, and property of the members.

The Earl of Lauderdale.

Mr. Grey.

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Address of
the society
to the peo-
ple of Great
Britain.Intention
good, but
tendency
dangerous.

charge of inconsistency. But though such intentions perhaps operated in some degree with some of the members, there is much reason to be convinced that the friends of the people, as a society, desired only what they conceived to be moderate reform, without having the least design to invade the fundamental parts of the constitution. Their association however was liable to weighty objections: these were not incidental, but resulted from the nature, constitution, and proceedings of the society, combined with the circumstances of the country; their two declared objects, extension of suffrage, and abridgment of the duration of parliament, were both expressed in vague terms; so that they might be, and in fact actually were, construed differently by the different votaries of reform: By very many they were interpreted with so great latitude, as to comprehend universal suffrage and annual parliaments. An address to the people of Great Britain, severally or aggregately respectable, as they were desiring them to co-operate in producing an undefined change in the legislature was a measure, however pure in its motives, very doubtful in its tendency. Presuming the existence of great and radical abuses, it either supposed the incompetency of parliament to remedy evils, and consequently its insufficiency for its constitutional purposes; or was futile in desiring from the people a co-operation which was not wanted. It afterwards appeared that this society proposed to the people, to form themselves into associations to petition parliament for reform. They thereby afforded a colourable pretext for framing associations composed of very different members,

bers, and entertaining very different sentiments: the friends of the people eventually produced the affiliated political clubs, which are since so well known under the name of the Corresponding Society, and proved so dangerous in their operations.

To found the disposition of parliament, Mr. Grey intimated his intention of urging parliamentary reform early in the next session. Mr. Pitt totally regardless of the imputations which might be made against himself personally, most unequivocally, reprobated the design of the society; he was friendly to reform peaceably obtained and by general concurrence, but deemed the present season altogether improper; and was therefore inimical to the attempt. The object of the society was to effect a change by the impulse of the people; he would strenuously oppose the movement of so formidable an engine; the operations and consequences of which was so much calculated to out-go the intentions of the mover. Mr. Fox did not join a society whose objects and proposed means were so extremely indefinite; and the notice was received with very strong and general disapprobation. The affiliated clubs now imitating the French jacobins, rapidly multiplied; the principal assemblage of this sort, was the *London Corresponding Society*; the secretary of these politicians was one Thomas Hardy a shoemaker, their ostensible plan was under the auspices of this shoemaker, and others of equal political ability, and importance in the community, to effect a change in parliament. The great preceptor of these disciples was Thomas Paine, whose second part was now published, and strenuously exhorted the practical application of the doctrines, which he had promulgated in his first; it directed

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Mr. Pitt
opposes this
engine of
change.

Rise and
progress of
correspond-
ing societies.

Second part
of Thomas
Paine's
rights of
man.

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1791.
Ferment
among the
populace.

The lower
classes be-
come poli-
ticians and
statesmen.

Proclama-
tion against
seditious
writings.

his votaries to pull down every establishment, and level all distinctions, in order to enjoy the Rights of Man ; by far the greater number of the lower ranks and a considerable portion of the middling classes were infected with the revolutionary fever which operated in the wildest and most extravagant ravings. Thomas Paine was represented as the minister of God, dispensing light to a darkened world* : the most industrious and useful classes of the state were seized with a furious desire of abandoning their own course of beneficial and productive labour, and taking the management of public affairs into their own hands. All the levelling notions of John Ball, John Cade, and the fifth monarchymen appeared to revive with an immense addition of new extravagance. Government had considered the theories of Thomas Paine's first part, as such deviations from common sense, that they expected their intrinsic absurdity would prevent them from doing any actual mischief, and had therefore forborne a judicial animadversion which might have given them adventitious importance. But when they found, that attempts were made to reduce the theories into practice, and that a second part of the speculative jargon, added direct exhortations to subvert the constitution, that they were very generally read by the vulgar and ignorant classes, and producing other works of a similar tendency, they adopted means both for a penal retrospect and for future prevention. A prosecution was commenced against Paine ; and a proclamation issued May 21st, warning the people against such writings and also such correspondencies with foreign parts,

* See a seditious morning paper of those days, called the Argus ; also democratical pamphlets, and the Analytical Review for 1791 and 1792, passim.

as might produce the same or similar effects; and enjoining all magistrates to exert their utmost efforts to discover the authors, printers, and publishers of such pernicious works. A copy of the proclamation being laid before the houses of parliament was taken into consideration on the 25th of May; and the discussion which it underwent shewed that a very considerable schism had taken place among members of opposition. Mr. Grey and the friends of the people, took the most active share in censuring the proclamation as neither necessary nor useful for its ostensible purpose. Their arguments were that the seditious writings which it professed an intention to restrain had prevailed for more than a year, and if they were so noxious ought to have been prosecuted at common law; and on their own hypothesis that the works in question were dangerous, ministers deserved severe censure for not having before employed proper means to remove this danger. But the prevention of seditious writings, was not the real object of the proclamation: its purpose was to disparage the friends of the people, to prevent parliamentary reform, and to disunite the whigs; and it was farther intended to increase the influence of government by subjecting to spies and informers, all who should differ from administration. These sentiments were by no means general, even among the usual adversaries of Mr. Pitt: in both houses, many members accustomed to vote with opposition joined the minister upon this occasion.* Considering precaution against the present rage of innovation as necessary to preserve the constitution, and their respective rank, property, and distinctions, they joined in supporting a measure cal-

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Discussions
in parlia-
ment.

Schism
among
members of
opposition.

* See Parliamentary Debates of May 25th, 1792.

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culated, they conceived, to represent so alarming a spirit. The overthrow of the aristocracy, abasement of rank, and confiscation of property under the new French system, impressed on their minds by the glowing eloquence of Mr. Burke, had alarmed many of the chief nobility, and great landed proprietors for their own privileges and possessions. These with their friends and adherents, and others who entertained or pretended to entertain similar sentiments without forming a junction with the ministers, voted on the same side, on subjects that respected the French revolution or any of its doctrines. In the house of peers, the earl of Lauderdale and the marquis of Lansdown only spoke against the proclamation: from this time ceased the great whig confederacy, which during the principal part of the two former reigns had been predominant; and during the present was so powerful as to have repeatedly ejected the Ministers agreeable to the crown.

The heir
apparent
testifies his
zeal for
supporting
the British
constitu-
tion.

On this occasion the heir apparent for the first time delivered his sentiments in parliament. His highness considering the critical state of affairs, as requiring from every friend to his country, a manifestation of the principles which he was resolved to support, and the more strongly in proportion to his rank and consequence in the country, spoke to the following effect:—"When a subject of such magnitude is before the house, I should be deficient in my duty as a member of parliament, unmindful of that respect which I owe to the constitution, and inattentive to the welfare, the peace, and the happiness of the people if I did not state to the world my opinion on the present subject of deliberation. I was edu-
cated

cated in the principles of the British constitution, and shall ever preserve its maxims : I shall ever cherish a reverence for the constitutional liberties of the people ; as on those constitutional principles carried uniformly into practice, the happiness of these realms depends, I am determined as far as my interest can have any force, to give them my firm and constant support. The question at issue is in fact, whether the constitution is or is not to be maintained ; whether the wild ideas of untried theory are to conquer the wholesome maxims of established practice ; whether those laws under which we have flourished for such a series of years, are to be subverted by a reform unsanctioned by the people. As a person nearly and dearly interested in the welfare, and I shall emphatically add the happiness of the people, it would be treason to the principles of my own mind, if I did not come forward and declare my disapprobation of the seditious writings, which have occasioned the motion before your lordships. My interest is connected with the interest of the people ; they are so inseparable, that unless both parties concurred, the happiness of neither could exist. On this great and this solid basis, I ground my vote for joining in the address which approves of the proclamation. I exist by the love, the friendship, and the benevolence of the people, and their cause I will never forsake so long as I live." The patriotic sentiments, so forcibly and impressively declared in the manly and dignified eloquence of the royal speaker, conveyed very great and general satisfaction to all his hearers, who loved their country, to whatever party they might adhere.

General
satisfaction
from the
manifestation
of the
prince's
sentiments.

Among the applicants for reform this year were

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State of
the police
in the
metropolis.

the royal boroughs of Scotland, from which certain petitioners stated flagrant abuses in the administration of the revenues, and also other grievances, that, if proved, would have demanded redress; but the allegations not having been supported by proof, the motions arising from the petitions were negatived by a great majority.

Great complaints very generally and justly prevailed at this time of the police of London. The British capital surpasses in populousness all European cities; in opulence any city throughout the known world. With wealth comes luxury, which frequently extends beyond the possessors of riches, pervades many of the poorer classes, and produces habitual wants, that cannot be supplied but by criminal means. In a city abounding with every pleasure that can captivate the human heart, excess and debauchery naturally exist. The freedom of the country does not permit the same means of prevention as under absolute governments; hence dissipation ripens into profligacy, profligacy rises into criminal enormity. In London the temptations are powerful and seductive to those indulgences which corrupt principle, vitiate character, and waste property. Thence arises the desire of seizing by fraud, theft, or force, the substance of others as the means of vice. The practicability of plunder is much greater, and the materials of depredation much more numerous, valuable, and accessible *, than in any other city known in the history of mankind. Besides the profligate of our own country, London, like ancient Rome †, is the receptacle of exotic wick-

* See Mr. Colquhoun's Treatise on the Police, passim.

† See Juvenal, satire-iii.

edness. Every adventurer who, from the poverty of his own country, personal incapacity, idleness, or dissipation, cannot earn a competent subsistence at home, flocks into England, and preys upon the metropolis. Hence arises a very great increase of vice and depredation, in their various departments, but, above all, in that parent of crime, gaming. This destructive propensity within thirty years far surpassed the most extravagant excesses of former times : descending from the great, it pervaded the middle and lower conditions of life, and generated many enormities. Akin to this propensity, and originating in the same desire of acquisition without industry, is the spirit of chimerical adventure in lotteries, funds, and other subjects of hazardous project. Though this spirit enriched several votaries, it impoverished many more; and sent them, with the habits of indulgence which had been cherished during the season of temporary success and aerial hopes, to increase the number of those who find in fraud and rapine the means of luxurious enjoyments. From these and many collateral causes, sprang a vast and increasing variety of crimes against the police of the country ; against the persons, habitations, and property of the inhabitants. A multiplicity of rules and ordinances had been enacted at divers periods and different occasions, but had experimentally proved unequal to the ends proposed, for want of sufficient powers being lodged in the magistracy and its agents, to discover and suppress, in a summary and expeditious manner, whatever had a visible tendency to disturb the public tranquillity. The justices of the peace were formerly men of rank,

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Justices of
the peace.

property, character, and consideration in the country where they were commissioned to act: such gentlemen gratuitously administered justice. The simplicity of life and manners prevalent among our ancestors did not afford that complication of misbehaviour and of transgressions for which such a multiplicity of laws in modern times, have been provided. But with the modes of artificial life, and the improvements of civilized society, the modes of crime also multiplied; and the once venerable office of justice of the peace became at last too fatiguing and burdensome for people of opulence and distinction. Their unwillingness to accept of so heavy a charge obliged the ruling powers to apply to individuals of inferior character, who, in accepting of it, had an eye to the profits and emoluments arising from the exercise of their judicial powers. From the period when that honourable and weighty office was thus degraded, it lost, by degrees, the reverence in which it had been held. Venal and mercenary persons were appointed, whose base practices became so notorious, that they drew general odium and contempt both upon themselves and their functions. Hence the vilifying appellation of *a trading justice* was at last applied, with too much reason, to many of those who exercised that office. To rectify the abuses imputed to these, and to place the office itself on a footing of respectability proportionate to its importance, in the beginning of March a bill was introduced, with the countenance and approbation of government, into the lower house. Different offices were to be established in the metropolis, at a convenient distance from each other for the prompt administration of those

Bill for the
amendment
of the London
police.

those parts of justice which are within the cognizance of justices of the peace. Three justices were to sit in each of these offices, with a salary of £300 a year to each: they were to be prohibited from taking fees individually; and the money from the fees paid into all the offices, was to be collected and applied to the payment of their salaries and official expences. That the law might have a preventive operation as well as a penal, a clause was inserted vesting in constables a power to apprehend people who did not give a satisfactory account of themselves, and empowering the justices to commit them as vagabonds. There were, it appeared from evidence, large gangs of the most desperate villains, who were notorious thieves, lived by no other means than plunder, infested every street of the metropolis, and put the person and property of every individual passenger in danger every hour of the day and night. Various objections were made to the bill as an encroachment on the liberty of the subject, and an increase of the power of the crown; but on investigation and enquiry, the necessity of it was found so strong as to over-rule the arguments of its opponents, and it was passed by a considerable majority.

While these measures were adopted to secure the innocent and industrious against the profligate and atrocious, the wisely generous Rawdon resumed his efforts for affording relief to the unfortunate, by a revision of the laws relating to debtors and creditors. His lordship's general object was, on one hand to compel the debtor to give up all that he possessed, on the other to prevent the creditor, after such a cession

Humane and discriminate propositions of Lord Rawdon for the relief of debtors and benefit of creditors,

of

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1794.

is opposed.

Abolition of
the slave-
trade is car-
ried in the
commons;is opposed
in the lords.The Duke
of Clarence
exhibits a
masterly
view of the
various ar-
guments,
and opposes
the aboli-
tion.

of effects, from confining the debtor in jail for life. His lordship, with discriminating justice equal to the benevolence of his spirit, fought the reciprocal benefit of both debtor and creditor. He proposed that no man, to gratify a malignant disposition, should have it in his power to keep his fellow-creature in perpetual imprisonment, merely on choosing to pay him four-pence a day; and that no man should continue in prison to the injury of his creditor, to revel in luxury on property which might pay his debts. As the subject was of very great importance, and required a full and minute discussion of principles, and a very nice discrimination of circumstances and cases, it was recommended to his lordship to postpone its introduction till the following session, by which time it might be maturely weighed; his lordship consenting, for the present withdrew the bill.

The slave trade this session again occupied the commons, and was also considered by the lords. In the lower house, the abolitionists having succeeded in the main question, were divided as to the time when the suppression should take place. At last, at the instance of Messrs. Dundas and Addington, it was agreed that the trade should cease from the 1st of January 1796. In the house of lords, the same arguments were used that had been employed on both sides by the commons. The Duke of Clarence, who now, for the first time, spoke in the house of peers, made a very able, comprehensive, and impressive speech, against the abolition of the slave-trade. This royal senator rejected all fanciful theories, argued from plain and stubborn facts, and took

took for his guide experience, the only unerring director of the statesman and lawgiver. Indeed his repeated orations on this subject exhibited and enforced every argument, from either humanity, justice, political and commercial expediency, that could be adduced; and his clear and manly reasonings constitute the most satisfactory and complete treatise which has hitherto appeared on that side of the question. The majority of the peers concurred with his highness in opposing the abolition, but the final determination of the question was postponed to the succeeding year.

Among the national objects which engrossed this session of parliament, was the state of our forests. Commissioners appointed to inspect the crown lands reported that the principal reservoir of materials for our navy, the New Forest in Hampshire, was in such a condition, that unless proper attention were bestowed immediately, there would be no timber fit for public service for many years; but that if adequate care were employed, in a short time it might yield a considerable quantity. Impressed by their representations, Mr. Pitt proposed a bill to enclose certain parts of the New Forest, for promoting the growth of timber. Very strong objections were made to this proposition in the house of commons, of which many of the members professed to think it a job for the private emolument of Mr. Rose secretary to the treasury, instead of a national object. In the house of peers it was strongly reprobated, particularly by the lord chancellor, and was finally relinquished.

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State of
the crown
lands, espe-
cially fo-
rests.

Mr. Pitt's
bill for in-
closing the
New Forest,
is rejected
by the
peers.

Mr.

CHAP.
XLVIII.1792.
Bill of Mr.
Dundas for
facilitating
the pay-
ment of
wages and
prize money
to sailors.

Mr. Dundas having in his official capacity, as treasurer of the navy, learned the many difficulties which, through their thoughtlessness and ignorance of business, our gallant supporters often experience in the recovery of their wages and prize money, introduced a bill to remove the obstacles, and prevent the frauds. When the bill was passed, Mr. Dundas sent a printed account of the spirit, tendency, and provisions of this new act, to all the parochial clergy in Britain, to be read from the pulpits, and explained to sailors and their connections. Since that time the impostures which before were so frequently practised by personating individuals, forging wills, and other criminal artifices, are very rarely attempted.

Finance.

In bringing forward his plan* of finance, Mr. Pitt shewed the national revenue to be in such a favourable state, that a diminution of the public burdens might be reasonably expected. The taxes for the year 1791 had produced £ 16,730,000, exceeding the average of the last four years £ 500,000; after subtracting from which the sum total of the expenditures, which amounted by the reductions proposed to £ 15,811,000, the permanent income would exceed the permanent expence, including the million annually appropriated to the extinction of the national debt, by no less than £ 400,000. The supplies wanted for the present year would amount to £ 5,654,000, for which the means provided constituted a sum that exceeded the former by £ 37,000. From the foregoing

Prosperous
state of
commerce
and re-
venue.

* February 17th.

statement

statement, Mr. Pitt was of opinion, that the surplus would enable government to take off such taxes as bore chiefly on the poorer classes, to the amount of one half of that sum; and to appropriate the other half to the diminution of the public debts. By the methods projected for the redemption of this debt, £25,000,000 would be paid off in the space of fifteen years; towards which the interest of the sums annually redeemed would be carried to the sinking fund, till the annual sum to be applied to the redemption of that debt amounted to £4,000,000. This favourable state of the finances arose from the actual prosperity of the nation, which, though arrived at an eminent degree, had not yet attained that summit of grandeur and felicity, that lay within the reach of its industry and manifold abilities. During the discussion on the ways and means, several severe strictures were made on the mischiefs of lotteries, in wasting the property and corrupting the morals of the lower classes. Ministers replied, that the lottery was a tax upon adventure, which would exist though it were not taxed, it was no reason to forbear a productive source of revenue, that its subject might be abused. Near the close of the session Mr. Dundas laid before the house his annual statement of the income and expenditure of British India. In the preceding session the surplus, after deducting all charges, was £1,409,000, applicable to the reduction of the company's debt, and to purchase an investment. The actual revenues of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, he stated at £7,350,000; the sum remaining, together with that which arose from the sale of imported goods, amounted

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Prospect of
farther re-
ducing the
debt and
taxes.

Flourishing
state of
India fi-
nances.

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to £ 591,000, from which deducting the interest paid at Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, the surplus of the whole was between three and £ 400,000. From a general review it appeared, that war with Tippoo Saib, and the interest of the debt, had nearly exhausted the whole revenue of India, and the profits of the sales; and that a debt had been contracted of £ 1,782,328, arising from the purchase of investments. Notwithstanding the increase of the India debt, Mr. Dundas stated the affairs of the company to be on no worse a footing at the commencement of 1792, than at the commencement of 1791; and they had been improved at home by the payment of debts to the amount of £ 694,000, and by an increase of money in their treasury, amounting to £ 541,400. Thus after a war of eight months, the company's finances were only the worse by £ 276,000. On the 15th of June, the session terminated with a speech from the throne, in which his majesty, mentioning the state of affairs in Europe, declared his own intention to observe a strict neutrality.

Political
transactions
in India.

While so many important concerns both internal and continental interested the British nation, a war breaking out in India, engaged a considerable share of the public attention. The peace of Mangalore, caused by the reduction of Tippoo Saib's strength, endured no longer than his deficiencies lasted. Inheriting the views and passions of his father, he sought the empire of India, and as a step to its attainment, the expulsion of the English, his most powerful rivals. For several years he had been collecting

collecting and disciplining large armies ; and though hopeless of assistance, either from France or the native powers, was not afraid singly to provoke England to war. The English government in India, well informed of his designs, was sufficiently prepared for counteraction. Mr. Pitt's plan for the administration of the Indian territories, executed under the direction of Mr. Dundas, had corrected abuses, restored prosperity, and extended revenue through British India. Sir John Macpherson succeeded Mr. Hastings as governor general, and imitated in peace the plans of economy which his predecessor had concerted and executed, as firmly and constantly as was possibly consistent with the necessary expenditure of multiplied wars: he thereby surmounted the pecuniary difficulties in which the executive government was unavoidably involved. He liquidated the civil and military debts which had been incurred, and established such a system for reducing expenditure and improving income, as greatly facilitated the beneficial administration of the board of controul. Lord Cornwallis being sent out to India, in spring 1786, and with the double appointment of governor general and commander in chief, arrived at Calcutta in September, and found the different presidencies in rising prosperity. He availed himself with moderation, firmness, and temper, of the best arrangements of his predecessors, and introduced several new regulations that contributed farther to the public welfare, including the security and happiness of the natives. In Madras and Bombay, affairs were proportionably flourishing ; the British presidencies were also secured

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Beneficial effects of Mr. Pitt's legislative measures, and Mr. Dundas's executive management.
Sir John Macpherson Governor General,

able and successful administration of.

He is succeeded by Lord Cornwallis, who proceeds in plans of comprehensive improvement.

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Tippoo
Saib recruits
his strength.
He attacks
the Rajah
of Travancore.

War, and
invasion of
Myfore.

Campaign
of 1792,
indecisive.

1791, Lord
Cornwallis
invades
Myfore, and
comes with-
in sight of
Seringapa-
tam;

secured by a very powerful military force. The Nizam and the Mahrattas, as well as less considerable powers in the southern parts of the peninsula, were in alliance with the English. Such was the state of India when Tippoo Saib commenced hostilities by attacking our ally the Rajah of Travancore, whose dominions the English had guaranteed with Tippoo's consent, at the late peace. The council of Madras remonstrated, and attempted amicable mediation, but to no purpose. Bound in honour and justice to protect our ally, the supreme government of Bengal declared war against the sultan of Myfore. In June 1790, general Meadows from the Carnatic, invaded Tippoo's dominions, while general Abercrombie from the west, having conquered Cannamore, advanced towards Seringapatam. Tippoo, with masterly skill, eluded all Meadows' ablest efforts to bring him to battle, and after a long and tiresome succession of marches and countermarches, with several skirmishes, the English general was obliged by the rainy season to return to Madras. Nor were Abercrombie's exertions after the reduction of Cannamore during the first campaign, attended with any decisive efforts. Though the campaign in all its operations, very honourably displayed British valour and conduct, yet it did not answer expectations, and Lord Cornwallis himself judged it expedient to take the field the following year. In March 1791, he proceeded to Myfore by the Eastern Ghauts; and having surmounted the passes, he attacked Bangalore, the second city of the Myforean empire. Tippoo marched to its relief: for so important an object ventured a pitched

pitched battle, was defeated, and the town was taken by storm. Lord Cornwallis now proceeded towards the capital of Mysore, whither Abercrombie was also advancing with the western army. In the month of May he arrived in the neighbourhood of Seringapatam, where he found Tippoo very strongly posted, and protected in front and flank by swamps and mountains: not deterred by these difficulties, the British general attacked the enemy, and though the Mysoreans made a very gallant resistance, entirely defeated them, and compelled them to seek shelter under the guns of the capital. The sun was about to set when the victorious English, pursuing the enemy, first beheld Seringapatam, rising upon an island, in all the splendor of Asiatic magnificence, decorated with sumptuous buildings, encircled by most beautiful gardens, and defended by strong and extensive fortifications. The grand object of their pursuit now appeared to the English within their immediate grasp; but disasters which no foresight could have anticipated, and no wisdom could have prevented, now obstructed its attainment. A covering army was necessary while they were carrying on the siege, both for supporting their operations, and for commanding the country, to secure the conveyance of provisions. When Lord Cornwallis set out on this expedition, he had trusted to the co-operation of the Mahrattas, but was disappointed. Still expecting General Abercrombie, he marched up the Caverry, to secure and facilitate the advance of the western army; but the river suddenly swelling, rendered the junction of the two armies impracticable. The troops from Bombay re-

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luctantly

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is prevented by the floods of the Caverry from investing the metropolis of Mysore.

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In 1792,
he besieges
Seringapa-
tam.

luciantly yielding to necessity, departed for the western coast, exposed to all the fury of the monsoon which was then raging on the Malabar side of the mountains. Cornwallis having halted some days to cover the retreat of the other army, deemed it expedient to defer the siege of Seringapatam till the following campaign, and spent the remainder of the season in reducing the interjacent country and forts, securing communication with the allies, preparing plentiful supplies of provision, and making other dispositions for commencing the investment as soon as the monsoon should be over. The most difficult and most important acquisitions during the remainder of this campaign, were Nundydroog, the capital of a rich district, and Savendroog, or the Rock of Death, a fortress which commanded a great part of the country between Bangalore and Seringapatam. Early in 1792, the Nizam and the Mahrattas joined the British army, now on its march; and on the 5th of February, the British host once more appeared before Tippoo's capital. On the 7th, soon after midnight, they attacked the sultan's lines, forced his camp, gained a complete victory, and compelled him to confine himself within the city. The Bombay army now arriving, a junction was effected between Abercrombie and the commander in chief, and the city was invested on every side. Seringapatam has the form of a triangle almost isosceles: two sides are washed by the river, while the third is joined to the country. On this, the western side, as naturally the most accessible, the fortifications are the strongest: aware of this circumstance, the British general instead of directing

his

his main attack from the island, resolved to make his assault across the river. The trenches were open, the siege was advancing with great rapidity, and dispositions were made for commencing an immediate assault. The sultan seeing himself hemmed in on every side, importuned by the people to terminate the war, and fearing sedition if he refused, at last sued for peace, which was granted him on the following conditions : first that he should cede one half of his dominions to the allied powers ; secondly, that he should pay three crores, and thirty lacks of rupees * ; thirdly, that he should unequivocally restore all the prisoners which had been taken by the Mysoreans from the time of Hyder Ally ; and fourthly, that two of his three eldest sons should be delivered up as hostages for the due performance of the treaty. Agreeably to these terms, the treasure began to be carried to the British camp, and on the 26th, the young princes were conducted to Lord Cornwallis. This ceremony was performed with great pomp : meanwhile Tippoo made some attempts to retard the execution of the treaty, but Lord Cornwallis issuing orders for recommencing the siege, he submitted to all the British demands ; and the peace was finally concluded on the 19th of March. Thus ended a war which delivered the company from the dangers to which it was exposed, by the inveterate hostility of the most powerful of its neighbours ; constantly inclined from interest and connection, to unite with France. The territories of which Tippoo was divested, were divided between the three allied powers, in three equal portions.

Tippoo
sues for
peace, and
obtains it
at the dic-
tation of
Lord Corn-
wallis.

* About £4,125,000.

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Generous
conduct of
his lordship
respecting
prize mo-
ney.Measures of
for the im-
provement
of India.

This act of good faith to our allies, and the separate arrangements made by Lord Cornwallis with the nabobs of Oude and the Carnatic, as well as the principal native rajahs, left a very honourable and advantageous impression of British justice on the memory of the natives. Lord Cornwallis and General Meadows, with great generosity, resigned their share of the plunder to the rest of the army. His lordship having reduced this potent enemy, turned his attention to the improvement of the territory which had been ceded by the sultan of Mysore. Several British gentlemen had applied themselves to the study of the oriental languages, and by this means had become acquainted with the history and customs of the natives. Among other valuable information, they had learned the ancient mode of collecting the revenues throughout India. By conversancy in the Persian and Indostan tongues, both civil and military officers discovered that the system of collection in Mysore was extremely productive, without oppressing the inhabitants; and that its chief advantage arose from the imposts being fixed, so that accounts were simplified, and the oppressions of intermediate agents were not suffered to exist. His lordship, from the knowledge which he had acquired concerning Indian systems of finance, extended his improvements to Bengal, and other settlements in India*.

* See Annual Register, 1792.

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The French revolution chiefly engages the attention of the continent and of Britain.—The British government still resolved not to interfere in the internal affairs of France.—Catharine's views respecting Poland—she desires to embrace her powerful neighbours in war with France.—Cautious prudence of Leopold.—Convention at Pilnitz between the chief powers of Germany.—The parties disavow hostile intentions against France.—The French king notifies to foreign princes his acceptance of the new constitution—answers of the different powers.—Circular note of the Emperor.—Sweden and Russia urge the German powers to active hostilities, but without effect.—Proceedings in France.—Meeting of the second National Assembly—they conceive internal revolution a reason for changing the law of nations—Seizure of Avignon—Operations of the French exiles at Coblenz.—The king urges them to return—rapid diminution of the king's power.—General character of the French nation.—violent passions, ardour of pursuit, and energy of action—the same character appears in their religious, loyal, and democratical enthusiasm—progress of republicanism.—Intrigues between the royalists and republican leaders—from the emptiness of the royal coffers are unavailing.—The king refuses to attempt his escape.—Different views of the emigrant princes and of the nobles—of foreign potentates.—Disputes between the French government and the elector of Treves.—The princes of the empire headed by the Emperor and supported by Prussia form a confederacy for defending their rights.—Sudden death of the Emperor.—Preparations of the king of Sweden.—Assassination of that heroic prince.—The French government demands of Austria and Prussia the disavowal of a concert hostile to France.—Basis of tranquillity proposed by Francis and Frederic William.—French declare war against Austria and Prussia.—Counter declarations.

tions.—*The Duke of Brunswick is appointed general of the combined armies of Germany.—Preparations of France and distribution of the armies.—The French invade the Austrian Netherlands—their first operations are desultory and unsuccessful—unprovided state of their armies—is imputed to treachery.—Dispositions of government to remedy this defect. The Duke of Brunswick arrives at Coblenz.—The allied powers misinformed concerning the disposition of the French nation—under this misinformation they concert the plan of the campaign—they propose to invade France and restore monarchy.—Manifesto of the duke of Brunswick—threatens more than its authors can execute—unwise and hurtful to the cause.—State of parties in France—the manifesto combines diversity of sentiment into unanimous determination to resist foreign interference—hurries the downfall of kingly power—and completely defeats the purposes of its framers.—Proceedings at Paris—power of the jacobins—the sansculottes—decrees for raising a jacobin army and punishing refractory priests—the king refuses his sanction.—La Fayette repairs to Paris—but is obliged to fly—he leaves the French army and surrenders to the Austrians.—French enthusiasm on the approach of the combined armies.—Anniversary of July 14th.—The Marseillais—passive citizens.—The mayor of Paris in the name of his constituents demands the deposition of the king.—Proceedings of the 10th of August—a banditti assault the Thuilleries—valour of the Swiss guards—they are overpowered and massacred by the savage mob.—The royal family carried prisoners to the Temple—deposition of the king—plan of provisional government drawn up by Brissot—manifestoes to the French and to foreign powers—plan of a convention—persecution of the unyielding priests.—Church plate is sent to the mint and the bells are returned into cannon.—Domiciliary visits.—Massacres of September—atrocious barbarity towards the Princess Lamballe.—Meeting of the national convention.—English societies address the convention with congratulations and praise—accompany their commendations with a gift of shoes.*

foes.—The corresponding society by its secretary Thomas Hardy shoemaker, invites the French republic to fraternity with Britain.—The convention believes the boasts of such reformers, that they speak the voice of the British nation—this belief influences their political conduct.—Schemes of the convention for procuring the property of other countries.—Proceedings of the Duke of Brunswick.—He enters France and advances towards Champaign.—Dumourier the French general, occupies a strong position.—The Duke of Brunswick retreats.—Elation of the French.—Dumourier enters the Netherlands, defeats his enemy at Jemappe, and reduces the country.—The French propose to conquer and revolutionize all neighbouring states.—Noted decree of November 19th, encouraging foreign nations to revolution.—The French open the Scheldt, contrary to treaties with Britain.—Effects in Britain from French doctrines and proceedings.—Anti-constitutional ferment during the recess of 1792.—English republicans confidently hope for a change.—Alarm of many friends of the constitution.—Mr. Reeves's association against republicans and levellers—is very generally joined—and gives an important turn to public opinion.—The king embodies the militia—and at such a crisis summons parliament before the appointed time.

WHILE lord Cornwallis thus effected so great a change in Indolstan, the eyes of all Europe were fixed on the revolutions of Poland and France. From the admiration of virtue, or from the enmity of ambition, princes and subjects were warmly interested in the concerns of the gallant, moderate, and discriminating votaries of rational liberty in Poland, but they were still more universally and vigilantly attentive to the furious proceedings of democratical and anarchical licence in France. Every friend of human rights regarded the Polish establishment of diffused freedom

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with complacency and satisfaction ; but he rejoiced at it on account of the Poles themselves, without considering his own security or interest as likely to be affected by the acts of men who confined their views to their own country. In contemplating France, whether with a friendly, hostile, or impartial regard, every neighbouring beholder saw that the conduct of the Gallic revolutionists would and must influence other nations. The principles and proceedings, whether deserving praise, reprobation, or a mixture of both, were general in their object, and energetic in their operation ; and their effects, happy or miserable, evidently must be extensive. The monarchs of the continent, conscious that even moderate and rational liberty was by no means consistent with their own respective governments, regarded with alarm a system, tending not merely to restrain, but to crush and annihilate monarchy. Britain declared her resolution not to interfere in the internal affairs of France ; but the other sovereigns by no means concurred in disclaiming such intentions ; indeed some of them were severally predisposed to a very contrary policy. Since the peace of Werela, a close intercourse had subsisted between Catharine and Gustavus. The ambitious empress foiled in the expectations with which she had begun the Turkish war, saw a fresh barrier rising against her power in the establishment of Polish independence, which, if suffered to acquire strength and stability, would counteract her future projects ; she therefore resolved to crush the new-born freedom. Austria and Prussia only possessed the power of obstructing her designs ; and though they

were

The British government still resolved not to interfere in the internal affairs of France.

Catharine's views respecting Poland.

were at present upon amicable terms, yet she wished to have a stronger security for the forbearance of their interference: the most effectual, she well knew, would be, if she could occupy them in another quarter. As a sovereign she was, no doubt, inimical to doctrines so unpalatable to crowned heads, and in some degree entered into the sympathies of her neighbours. But the prevention of republicanism, not very likely to make its way among the slavish boors of Russia, was by no means her principal or immediate object. Concealing, however, her real intentions, she expressed not only the strongest indignation against the French revolutionists, but openly and publicly was the first to declare herself determined to protect and restore the ancient government of France. She applied to the king of Sweden, who very readily listened to her suggestions, and promised to co-operate. Catharine and Gustavus expressed the warmest approbation of the emperor's letter *. The empress dispatched a minister to the French princes at Coblenz, assisted them with money, and pressed them to enter on their expedition. Though determined to avoid all active interference herself, she assumed the † appearance of the most ardent zéai against the French revolutionists. Leopold proceeded in his plans with a caution and coolness which the more ardent advocates of a counter-revolution considered as dilatory. In August 1791 a convention was held at Pillnitz between the emperor, the king of Prussia, and the elector of Saxony. The friends of the French revolution

She desires to embroil her powerful neighbours in war with France.

Cautious prudence of Leopold.

Convention at Pillnitz between the chief powers of Germany.

* See Chapter xlvii.

† Bouillé's Memoirs, 457.

formed

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The parties
disavow
hostile in-
tentions
against
France.

The French
king noti-
fies to fo-
reign princes

formed an hypothesis that at this meeting a treaty was concluded for two great purposes; the restoration of absolute monarchy, and the dismemberment of the French empire *. The real object of this convention is now found to have been to preserve the public tranquillity of Europe, and for that purpose to endeavour, by combined influence, to effectuate the establishment of a moderate and limited monarchy in France. The conference at Pilnitz was attended by the Count d'Artois, the Marquis de Bouillé, and Mr. de Calonne. These illustrious exiles and the contracting sovereigns, stipulated that they would support the establishment of order and moderate liberty; and that if the king of France would concur, and other potentates accede to their designs, they would exert their influence and power to obtain to his christian majesty freedom of action; Leopold, publishing this engagement, disavowed hostile intentions towards France.

In the month of September a notification was sent by the French king to all the crowned heads in Eu-

* On this fiction, the vindicators of France in other countries, and especially in Britain, in conversation, speeches, and writings, during the first five years of the war, rested their principal arguments to prove, that innocent and unoffending friends of liberty and of the human race, were driven by necessity to defend themselves against the confederation of despots which met at Pilnitz. A paper was actually published as an authentic copy of this treaty of Pilnitz, not only supported by no evidence, but carrying, in its intrinsic absurdity, the clearest proofs that it was a forgery. Another fabrication of the same kind was also published as a state paper, and long referred to under the title of the treaty of Pavia. These forgeries are very fully and ably exposed in the Anti-jacobin newspaper, by a writer under the signature of DETECTOR.

rope,

rope, that he had accepted the new constitution. Britain sent a very friendly answer: in his reply, Leopold expressed his hopes that this measure might promote the general welfare, remove the fears for the common cause of sovereigns, and prevent the necessity of employing serious precautions against the renewal of licentiousness. The answers of some of the other powers expressed their disbelief of the king's freedom, and therefore forbore any opinion concerning the notification; but the greater number sent friendly replies*. In November the emperor sent a note to the different powers of Europe, declaring that he considered the French king as free, and the prevailing party to be disposed to moderate counsels, from which his majesty augured the probable establishment of a regular and just government, and the continuance of tranquillity. But lest the licentious disorders should be renewed, the emperor thought the other powers should hold themselves in a state of observation, and cause to be declared by their respective ministers at Paris, that they would always be ready to support in concert, on the first emergency, the rights of the king and the French monarchy†. About the end of November his imperial majesty wrote a note to the king of France, declaring that he had no intention to interfere with the affairs of his kingdom as long as the French should leave to their king all the powers‡ which they had voluntarily stipulated,

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 his acceptance of the new constitution.

Answers of the different powers.

Circular note of the emperor.

* See in State Papers of October and November 1791 the respective answers.

† State Papers, November 19th, 1791.

‡ This declaration certainly was an interference, as it prescribed bounds beyond which they were not to go in the arrangement of their own affairs.

and

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Sweden and
Russia urge
the German
powers to
active hos-
tilities, but
without
effect.

Proceedings
in France.
Meeting of
the second
national
assembly.

They con-
ceive inter-
nal revolu-
tion a reason
for changing
the law of
nations.

and those which he had voluntarily accepted, in the new constitutional contract. Leopold, indeed, manifested in every part of his proceedings a disposition to maintain peace with the French nation. He discouraged the emigrants from assembling within his territories to concert projects inimical to the revolutionary government. This conduct was by no means agreeable to the French princes, who strongly expostulated with him on the measures which he was pursuing. The king of Sweden and the empress of Russia strenuously urged both the German potentates to active hostilities *, but without effect : and long after the meeting at Pilnitz, the princes who conferred proved themselves inclined to peace.

Meanwhile the second national assembly met in October 1791 : having sworn to maintain the constitution of the kingdom decreed by the constituent assembly, they immediately exhibited a specimen of their legislative justice by passing a law to rob the pope of the territory of Avignon, which had been ceded to that prince by the most solemn treaties. This act was a farther illustration of the principle already exemplified by the revolutionists in their aggressions on the German sovereigns, that because France had made a change in her internal constitution, she was also to alter the law of nations according to her convenience or pleasure, and to vio-

* The Marquis de Bouillé, who was in the confidence of the king of Sweden, quotes several letters which prove Gustavus to have been very anxious to take an active part in the restoration of monarchy ; but the zeal of Catharine, he says, never extended beyond professions. Page 457.

late the rights of independent states. Their next project of rapacious injustice was against the bishopric of Basle *. Thither they sent commissioners to settle certain differences which they pretended to have arisen amongst the inhabitants, and between Avignon and Carpentras. They began the system of their operations by instituting a club, and gaining partizans among the people: after massacring the most peaceable and respectable inhabitants, they compelled the remainder to meet, and vote their union with the kingdom of France. The French royalists were forming an army under the prince of Condé; and, from the continued junction of the nobles and their adherents, they were become very numerous. On the 14th of October the assembly decreed, that emigrants thus collected should be from that time considered as traitors against their country; and that, from the 1st of January 1792, such as should be known to be assembled should be punished with death; that all the French princes and public functionaries who should not return before the 1st of January, should be adjudged guilty of the same crimes, and suffer confiscation of their property. The king refused to ratify this decree, but endeavoured to reconcile the exiles to the French government by admonition and persuasion: he repeatedly dispatched letters to all the princes, earnestly intreating them to return: he used his endeavours by a public proclamation, as well as

Seizure of
Avignon.

Operations
of the French
exiles at
Coblentz.

The king
urges them
to return.

* See French Journals of the proceedings of the assembly, which the English reader will find with considerable accuracy, in the Gentleman's Magazine, and the historical substance in the Annual Registers; but in fuller and more minute detail in the *Moniteurs*.

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Rapid diminution of the king's power.

General character of the French nation, violent passions, ardour of pursuit, and energy of action.

all the private influence he possessed, to recal the emigrants to the bosom of their country, and to retain those who were inclined to emigrate. The French princes, in answer to the king's repeated letters, persisted in their refusal to acknowledge the constitution accepted by the king, and declared their views to be the re-establishment of the Roman catholic religion, and the restoration to the king of his liberty and legislative authority. The republican party, professing to think that the king secretly instigated the princes, endeavoured to excite in the nation a general mistrust of his intentions; and found their efforts so successful, that they were encouraged to proceed in executing their design of lessening the power of the king, and exalting their own on its ruins. The first step they took for the accomplishment of this end was, by all means to get rid of the usual marks of respect to his majesty's person. On the 6th February 1792, Condorcet, appointed president, was ordered to write a letter to the king, in which he was directed to lay aside the title of "Your Majesty." The lowest rabble were permitted, and even encouraged, to resort to the palace, and revile the royal family in the most gross and profligate terms.

The national character of Frenchmen appeared totally changed: that people which for so many ages had been distinguished for loyalty and religious zeal, now eagerly trampled on every remnant of monarchy or hierarchy. But the change was really much less in the constituents than in the direction of their character. The French nation has ever been distinguished for ardour of sensibility to the passion of the times: whatever objects, prevailing opi-

nions or sentiments proposed, they pursued with an energy, rapidity, and impetuosity, which naturally and necessarily produced excess. In whatever they fought, eager for pre-eminence, they ran into extremes : the same species of character which, in the sixteenth century, took the lead in augmenting the domination of priests, in the seventeenth century in extending the power of kings, in the eighteenth was pre-eminent in enlarging the sway of atheists and levellers. Prompt in invention, and powerful in intelligence ; fertile in resources, and energetic in execution, the efforts of the French, whithersoever directed, never failed to be efficacious. Readily susceptible of impression, they were alive to sympathy. Sentiments and opinions were very rapidly communicated : what Frenchmen seek, they seek in a body. The same national character which supported the catholic league, and spread the glory and power of Louis XIV. now overthrew the monarchy. To render the king obnoxious, as well as to increase the means of force, the republicans repeated the reports of a confederacy of despots, declared their disbelief of Leopold's pacific professions, and procured a decree of the assembly, demanding satisfaction for the alleged treaty of Pilnitz. The Jacobin clubs, their pamphleteers, journalists, and other agents of confusion and anarchy, rang the changes on the treaty of Pilnitz, and affirmed that there was in the palace a junto, which they called an Austrian committee ; and of which De Gessan, the king's minister for foreign affairs, was alleged to be a leading member. At a public trial of one of the journalists for asserting the existence of such a committee, he could bring no proof to support his assertion ; nor

was

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The same character appears in their religious, loyal, and democratical enthusiasm.

Progress of republicanism.

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Intrigues
between the
royalists
and republi-
can leaders,
from the
emptiness of
the royal
offers are
unavailing.

was there ever any evidence adduced to give the smallest colour to the allegation. The royalists now counteracted the designs of the republicans with openness and boldness; they formed several projects for rescuing the king through the agency of Danton, and some other outrageous democrats, who manifested a disposition to betray their cause, if they found treachery more lucrative than their present violent adherence. Danton, that furious republican, received a hundred thousand crowns * for supporting motions really favourable to the king, though professedly inimical; but finding the resources of the court inadequate to his desires, resumed his republicanism. It is also affirmed that Brissot offered to betray his cause for a large sum of money, but that the court being either unwilling or unable to afford the bribe required † by this patriot, he persevered in his republican career ‡. A plan was concerted for effecting the king's escape to the coast of Normandy, which province was attached to his majesty. His flight, it is believed, would have been practicable; but the character of the king, mild and benevolent, without active enterprize, was little fitted to profit by these opportunities. His departure from Paris would, he thought, annihilate the monarchical constitution which he had sworn to protect; and expose all his adherents, declared or even suspected throughout France, to the infuriate cruelty of dominant licen-

* See Playfair's History of Jacobinism. † Ibid.

‡ Persons thoroughly acquainted with Brissot, declare that avarice was no part of his character; and as Mr. Playfair brings no proofs of his assertion, disbelieve it as improbable.

tioufness.

souffers. From these considerations the king refused to attempt his escape. Understanding reports to have been circulated that he was projecting to leave Paris; to contradict these he wrote a letter to the national assembly, in which he fully explained his sentiments, views, and intentions *. The friends of the king, and even of limited monarchy, regretted his unwillingness to venture any step that might rescue him from a situation in which he was so degraded and insulted. They conceived that the object was well worthy of the risk; and that the danger of flight was only doubtful, whereas the danger of continuance was, if not immediate, at least certain. Of the emigrants, the princes desired the restitution of the old government, but the majority of the exiled nobles and gentry desired the establishment of a moderate and limited monarchy. Foreign powers were also divided on this subject. Russia, Spain, and Sweden, proposed to restore the ancient monarchy. Prussia was somewhat favourable to this opinion, but would not interfere actively without the co-operation of Leopold. The emperor continued friendly to peace until the conduct of the French government proved to him its determination to disturb tranquillity. They still withheld satisfaction for their usurpations in Lorraine and Alsace. They threatened with hostility the elector of Treves, and alleged various pretexts for their displeasure; but chiefly, his expression of doubts respecting the freedom of the king, and permission given to French emigrants to assemble in his dominions. French troops having approached the fron-

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1792.
The king
refuses to
attempt his
escape.

Different
views of
the emigrant
princes and
of the no-
bles;

of foreign
potentates.

Disputes
between the
French go-
vernment,
and the
elector of
Treves.

* State Papers, February 17th, 1792.

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XLIX.

1798.
The princes
of the em-
pire, headed
by the em-
peror, and
supported
by Prussia,
form a con-
federacy for
defending
their rights.

Sudden
death of the
emperor.

tiers of Treves, and menacing his territories, the elector applied for protection to the emperor. This prince, as head of the Germanic body, proposed to the other princes of the empire an extensive plan of defensive confederation, for mutual and reciprocal security against French aggression, and ordered marshal Bender to march to the defence of Treves. The French government, in a style rather menacing than conciliatory, demanded an explanation of the emperor's intentions. The answer of Leopold, though firm, was still pacific, and disavowed every intention of aggressive hostility. Meanwhile the emperor died very suddenly * at Vienna. Francis, his son and successor, declared his intention to persevere in the pacific plan of his father, but to be prepared for defensive war. The French government categorically demanded a declaration of Francis's intentions, and received a reply announcing the existence of a concert for the purposes of defence, but not invasion. As the discussion proceeded, it became progressively more hostile †, and both sides prepared for war. Catharine, operating on the heroic mind of the Swedish king Gustavus, had induced him, so early as the summer of 1791, to join in a project for the relief of Louis, even if the emperor and Prussia kept aloof; and Spain soon after had acceded to this design. Gustavus, betaking himself to Coblenz, conferred with the

* After an illness of two days, which by many was ascribed to poison; but there was never any proof of this assertion.

† See State Papers, from January to March 1792. Correspondence between the ambassadors and ministers of France and Austria, at Paris and Vienna; especially the letters to and from Count Kaunitz.

exiled princes and nobility ; and, encouraged by Catharine, prepared an army which he was to head. He consulted Leopold and Frederic William, but found both unwilling to embark in so very hazardous a project. He, however, made dispositions for proceeding in his undertaking without their co-operation, and was preparing to conduct an armament which should make a descent on the coast of France, and co-operate * with the royalists, when, on the 16th of March 1792, being at a masquerade in his capital, from the hands of Ankerstroem, a disaffected nobleman, who, with others, had plotted against his life, he received a wound which proved mortal. He for twelve days languished in agonizing pain ; but retaining the use of his faculties, very ably and completely arranged his affairs ; left wise and beneficial directions to his youthful son, and breathed his last on the 28th of March, in the forty-eighth year of his age, and twenty-first of his reign † ; a prince for genius and heroism rarely surpassed, and not often equalled, even in the glorious annals of Swedish kings. The confederacy of princes which Gustavus and Catharine first proposed for modelling the government of France, without regard to the voice of the people, did not actually take place, yet a different concert, originating chiefly in the imperious and violent conduct of France herself, was unavoidably formed. Dumourier, now foreign

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XLIX.

1792.
Preparations
of the king
of Sweden.

Assassina-
tion of that
heroic
prince.

* Bouillé, chapters 12 and 13.

† On the sudden fall of these two princes, Tom Paine exultingly observed, " See how kings are melting away !"

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XLIX.

1792.
The French government demands of Austria and Prussia the disavowal of a concert hostile to France. Basis of tranquillity proposed by Francis and Frederic William.

French declare war against Austria and Prussia.

Counter declaration.

minister, in dictatorial terms required both from the courts of Berlin and Vienna the disavowal of any concert inimical to France, and the discontinuance of protection to the French emigrants. The answers of Prussia and Austria proposed a general principle as the basis of tranquillity; *that the French should not consider themselves, as from their revolution, entitled to violate the rights of other powers.* They therefore stated three subjects, on which they demanded satisfaction; first, that a compensation should be given to the princes possessed in Lorraine and Alsace. Secondly, that satisfaction should be rendered to the pope for the county of Avignon. Thirdly, that the government of France should have a sufficient power to repress whatever might give uneasiness to other states*. Dumourier replied that the king of Hungary had no concern in these discussions, repeated in still stronger terms the demand of the French government, and denounced war unless the answer was categorical and speedy. The two German potentates adhering to their former replies, the national assembly, on the 20th of April, declared war against the king of Hungary and Bohemia†, and soon after, against the king of Prussia. In the decree denouncing hostilities, the national assembly repeated the imputation of a hostile confederacy against the liberties of France. The court of Vienna, in its counter manifesto‡, disavowed as before, all offensive intentions. The princes of

* See State Papers, April 5th, 1792.

† State Papers, April 20th, 1792.

‡ State Papers, July 5th, 1792.

the German empire had formed a concert for reciprocal protection against the unjust pretensions of France, which had considered her internal changes as reasons for deviations from the faith of foreign treaties. The king of Prussia, as member of the confederation for securing Germany against the aggressions of France, declared himself compelled to take an active share in the war. But besides the defensive objects avowed by Francis, the king of Prussia's manifesto declared, that one of his purposes was to put an end to anarchy in France, to establish a legal power on the essential basis of a monarchical form, and thus give security to other governments against the incendiary attempts and efforts of a frantic troop*. Thus the repression of French principles was the chief object which, by his own avowal, induced the king of Prussia to join in hostilities against France; while the protection of the Germanic empire was ostensibly the principal motive of Francis. From the time that Leopold and Frederic William had concluded their alliance, they had joined in deeming the duke of Brunswick, the fittest general for directing the force of the defensive confederacy. An intercourse had been opened between them confidentially on this subject; and the duke was fully apprised, and approved of the enterprize of Leopold. When, from the aggression and declaration of France, war was become absolutely necessary, his serene highness accepted the command, and preparations were made for opening the campaign with the combined forces.

C H A P.
XLIX.
1793.

The duke of Brunswick is appointed general of the combined armies of Germany,

* See State Papers, July 24th, 1793.

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XLIX.

1792.
Preparations
of France,
and distri-
bution of
the armies.

Immediately after the declaration of war by France, the French forces were set in motion. The king had established four armies, in order to protect and cover his country, and to be in readiness to act as the existing circumstances might direct. The first army was assembled on the northern confines of France, under the command of the Marshal de Rochambeau, an experienced officer, who had served in the French armies during the American war. This force was destined to cover the frontier towards the Austrian Netherlands, from the German Ocean at Dunkirk, to Maubeuge, in French Hainault, with their right extending to the Meuse. The marquis de la Fayette, appointed to command the second army, fixed his head quarters at Metz, and occupied Nancy, Thionville, and Luneville. By this means was the cordon extended from the banks of the Meuse to the Moselle, and retained in check the important fortress of Luxemburg. The third army was formed on the Rhine, under Luckner, and extended from Landau, by Straßburg, towards Montbeliard, and the pass of Porentrui into Switzerland. The possession of this important defile, aided by the favourable position of the mountains of Jura, rendered the extensive frontier of Franche Comte entirely safe. A fourth army was assembled on the side of Savoy, to watch the motions of the king of Sardinia, who was expected to join the hostile confederacy. The army of the north, commanded by Rochambeau, amounted to above fifteen thousand men; the centre army, commanded by La Fayette, to seventeen thousand; the army of the Rhine, to about twenty-two thousand; the fourth,

to twelve thousand men. The reduction of the Low Countries was the object of this campaign; and the disaffection to the house of Austria still subsisting in the provinces, afforded probable expectations of success. The army under Rochambeau occupied the direct road to Brussels, without any impediment but the garrison of Mons. Fayette commanded the county of Namur, and the navigation of the Meuse; but the armies were found very imperfectly provided and disciplined: the French soldiers were deficient in military experience, in ammunition, and stores of every sort. Many of the officers warmly attached to the king were not eager in promoting a cause which they by no means deemed the cause of their sovereign. The war was begun with an attack on the cities of Mons and Tournay; but the soldiers being impressed with an idea that they were betrayed by their generals, retreated in great confusion; in their savage rage they murdered several officers, and among the rest Dillon, the lieutenant general. They trampled upon his body, and having lighted a fire, threw the corpse into the flames. The infuriated soldiers danced round the remains of their commander: so ferocious and hardened had they become from the influence of the revolutionary enthusiasm. Rochambeau, finding the army totally loosened from subordination and all honourable principles of duty, resigned in the highest disgust. Luckner, appointed commander of the army of the north, found the troops in a much worse situation than even his predecessor had represented. La Fayette made the same complaints of the unprovided state of the force entrusted to his command, as deficient in camp equipage, artillery, ammunition,

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1792.
The French
invade the
Austrian
Netherlands.

Their first
operations
are desultory and
unsuccessful.

Unprovided
state of
their armies.

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XLIX.**

1792.
Is imputed
to treachery.

Dispositions
of govern-
ment to
remedy this
defect.

The duke
of Brun-
swick arrives
at Coblenz.

The allied
powers
mis-inform-
ed con-
cerning the
disposition
of the
French
nation.

ammunition, and stores of every kind : in short, at the commencement of the war the armies of the French government were in so very unprovided a state, as could hardly arise even from negligence, without the co-operation of treachery. In such a condition of the forces it was found necessary, if not to abandon, to postpone the invasion of the Austrian Netherlands, until discipline were better established, magazines formed, and other dispositions made, proper for a campaign.

The Austrian force then in the Netherlands was not very considerable; and during the months of May and June the operations of both sides were desultory and unimportant. On the 3d of July, the duke of Brunswick arrived at Coblenz, with the first division of the Prussian army, and in the course of the month being joined by fresh troops, he prepared to commence the campaign. His serene highness, with very great talents, the deepest military skill, and eminent political abilities, is extremely diffident*. From that cause, joined to a gentle and delicate disposition, he frequently treated very inferior capacities with excessive deference, and did not with sufficient vigour maintain in deliberation the dictates of his own excellent understanding. Fitted to lead in council and in war, in the former the duke of Brunswick too frequently followed. In concerting the plan of the campaign 1792, he left the formation chiefly to Francis and Frederic William. These princes were impressed with an opinion, so naturally adopted, and studiously spread by the emigrants, that the greater number of Frenchmen

* This is the account given of him by various gentlemen who have visited Germany.

were

were attached to the old government, and would join the standard of monarchy if they found themselves properly supported; and on this supposition they formed the plan of the campaign. It was proposed that the duke of Brunswick should set out from Coblentz with an army of Prussians, fifty thousand strong, and march by Treves and Luxemburg to Longvy. After reducing this fortress, and also if possible Montmedi, the next object was to establish magazines, continue the march, and invest Verdun. In support of these, as well as of subsequent operations, the court of Vienna engaged to bring into the field two armies; the one to act between the Rhine and the Moselle, and to be of sufficient strength for the purpose of at once menacing Landau and Saar-Louis, and carrying on the siege of Thionville; while the other, of much superior force, should be engaged in the Low Countries; their positions were to be as near the Meuse as possible. Should the expectations of a general rise in France be disappointed, the duke of Brunswick was not to cross the river with his main body, but to detach a considerable portion of his army to co-operate with the Austrians in French Hainault, in reducing Verdun, Sedan, and Meziers. Thus the allies establishing themselves upon the French frontier, would be able to winter in security, and commence the following campaign with great advantage. To oppose this invading force, the entrenched camp at Maubeuge, and another at Maulde, with the strong fortress of Valenciennes, formed the principal points of defence on the part of the French. Previous to the march of the duke of Brunswick,

a mani-

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XLIX.

1792.
Under this mis-information they concert the plan of the campaign. They propose to invade France, and restore monarchy.

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1798.
Manifesto
of the duke
of Brun-
swick,

threatens
more than
its authors
can execute.

a manifesto was composed under the authority, and according to the sentiments of Francis, now emperor of Germany, and the king of Prussia; proclaiming the objects of these two princes in their projected invasion, and issued in the name of the duke of Brunswick, commander in chief of the expedition. This celebrated manifesto was founded on the same misinformation concerning the disposition of the French themselves, in which the plan of the campaign had originated. The proclamation declared, that the intention of the combined princes was neither to conquer any part of France, nor to interfere with the internal government of that kingdom, but simply to deliver the king and queen from captivity. It invited all the French soldiers and other Frenchmen, to join the combined army in executing this design, promised protection and security to all who should accept these proffers; and denounced vengeance against the persons and property of all who should oppose the efforts of the confederates. It declared the present governors responsible for every evil that should accrue to the country from their refractory resistance; called on the people to submit to their sovereign, and promised to intercede with the king to grant his gracious pardon to penitent offenders. It warned other towns, but especially the city of Paris, that if they refused to comply, they should be delivered up to military execution. This proclamation was extremely unwise in its principles and tenor, and no less hurtful in its effects. The hopes of co-operation which the invaders might reasonably entertain, rested on the divisions which subsisted in France.

The

Unwise and
hurtful to
the cause.

The parties continued reducible to four general classes; first, the royalists or abettors of the old government, votaries of an absolute power, much more slavish than the most bigotted English tory of the seventeenth century would practically endure. Secondly, the feuillants, votaries of limited monarchy, desiring a mixture of liberty and order, and not much differing from English whigs. Thirdly, the constitutionalists, a still numerous, though decreasing body, friendly to the system which had been established by the late national assembly. Fourthly, the republicans, with great diversity of particular scheme, but concurring in desiring the total abolition of monarchy. If skilful means had been employed to unite the three former parties in defence of monarchy, perhaps the republicans and jacobins might have been repressed. The proclamation tended to unite those who were before divided; and by requiring implicit submission to the king, and declaring that all constitutional changes should originate in his will, it inculcated principles which only the slavish class would admit; and which every monarchical votary of liberty must reject as indig-
nantly as the most outrageous jacobin; besides, it not only was contrary to the sentiments of every French friend of liberty, but of every French sup-
porter of national independence. Two foreign sovereigns declared themselves judges between the members of the French internal government. It could not be reasonably expected that the national spirit of a Frenchman would suffer such an assumption of power by Germans. This manifesto in its effects most materially injured the cause which its framers

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1792.
State of
parties in
France.

The mani-
festo com-
bines
diversity of
sentiments
into una-
nimous
determina-
tion to
resist foreign
interference.

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1792.

hurries the
downfall
of kingly
power,
and com-
pletely
defeats the
purposes
of its
framers.

framers professed to promote: it afforded a simple and comprehensive principle of union in the abhorrence of despotism to be imposed by foreign powers: and combined the friends of moderate and rational liberty, with the most furious partizans of untrouled licentiousness. By inducing many to believe that the king approved its sentiments and principles, it rendered his personal safety insecure; and hurried the downfall of the kingly power in France. It totally deviated from the defensive system which the emperor had professed to support, and appeared to justify the imputation of a concert of kings to crush Gallic liberty. Instead of intimidating, it enraged the French nation: threats, without the power of execution, recoiled in indignant scorn upon the menacers. The apprehension of a confederacy formed to dictate to an independent nation the plan of internal government which it should adopt, roused the pride of Frenchmen, and turned the energy of their character to military efforts, invincible in defence, and as it afterwards proved, irresistible in attack.

Proceedings
at Paris.

Meanwhile proceedings at Paris were hastening the destruction of monarchy, and in effect co-operating with the dictatorial menaces of the confederated invaders. The friends of monarchy absolute or limited, fast continued to emigrate: the king was forced to dismiss ministers of his own choice, and to receive republicans * in their place. The principal

* They consisted of members of a party known by the name of Girondists, from the Girond department, along the banks of the Garonne, which district the principal members of this party represented,

cipal direction was possessed by the jacobin clubs : their system of government was simple and obvious, to overawe and overrule the legislative assembly by the national guards, and the mob of Paris, nor did they seem to have any greater or more fixed object in the exercise of their power, than the subversion of all order, and the confusion of all property. There still remained a diversity of condition, notwithstanding all their advances in the levelling system. The proprietors of estates, the merchants, and the manufacturers, were in a better situation than their respective day labourers, and also than many others, who though possessing no property, did not choose to be labourers. The disposition to idleness was greatly increased by the revolution : many of the inhabitants of Paris had chiefly subsisted by the employment which they received from the nobility and other landed proprietors. These sources no longer flowing, numbers became idle from want of industrious occupation. The sovereignty of the mob was not friendly to productive industry ; it could not reasonably be expected, that men taught to conceive themselves kings would vouchsafe to dig ditches or pave the streets. Besides, these sovereigns, even if disposed to manual labour, had no time to spare. They were engaged in politics : hence a very numerous body

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1792.

represented. They had been constitutionalists, but were now become republicans, though less violent in their professions than the Jacobins. Among the Girondists were the chief literary men in France.

of

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XIX.

1794.

Decrease for
raising a
jacobin
army, and
punishing
refractory
priests.

The king
refuses his
sanction.

of citizens, who before their elevation had been useful handicrafts men, were now in their sovereign capacity extremely idle, and extremely poor; and as the new liberty included an exemption from moral and religious restraint, they were also extremely profligate. To the poverty of the idle and profligate, order and tranquillity, which preclude them from their principal means of subsistence, are naturally obnoxious. The meanest and most beggarly citizens sought a more general equalization of property, and assumed the supreme executive authority. A ragged coat was deemed an honourable testimony of the wearer's political principles; the lowest rabble, denominated from their dress sans-culottes, or ragamuffins, took a lead in public affairs. The national guards were now become somewhat moderate: the jacobin club, the sans-culottes, and the violent republicans of every kind, determined that an army should be formed, composed of twenty thousand men, under the controul of the republicans. Without any order from the king, the war minister proposed that the desired force should be raised and encamped under the walls of Paris. The assembly, to gratify the sans culottes, passed the decree: under the same influence they also enacted another law against refractory priests. The king firmly refused to sanction these laws, which were respectively inimical to his executive authority, and to justice. The republican ministers urged their master, not without threats, to comply with the desire of the people; but his majesty with becoming dignity dismissed these insolent servants. These and other republicans, as the decree was not passed, embodied

embodied a jacobin army for themselves: An immense multitude assembled from different quarters of Paris, and, armed with pikes, axes, swords, muskets, and artillery, marched in a body, on the 20th of June, towards the Thuilleries, that they might force the king to sanction the two decrees. Appearing before the palace they demanded admittance, and the gates being thrown open, the rabble violently entered into the apartment of their king. His majesty received this banditti with calmness and moderation; but though not without a dread of being assassinated, he firmly refused to comply with their insolent demands. The fury of the mob at length subsided, and they departed without effecting their purposes. Numbers of the populace who had not been engaged in the outrage, expressed their indignation against the rioters, and their admiration of the king's courage and conduct; and the various other parties were extremely incensed against the jacobins. The new minister for the home department taking advantage of this disposition, published a proclamation on the subject of the recent tumult, which gave such satisfaction, that many of the departments sent addresses to the king and to the national assembly, demanding that the authors and abettors of the insurrection might be punished with the utmost severity. It appeared on enquiry that Petion the mayor, and Manuel the procurator, might have easily either prevented or quelled this insurrection; they were therefore both suspended from their offices. The constitutionalists highly approved of this sentence, which the royalists thought too moderate, while the jacobins breathed vengeance against

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1792.
La Fayette
repairs to
Paris,

but is
obliged to
fly;

he leaves
the French
army and
surrenders
to the
Austrians.

French en-
thusiasm on
the ap-
proach of
the com-
bined
armies.

against the punishers of a magistrate who instigated insurrection. La Fayette, finding the tide of popular opinion to run somewhat less against monarchy, repaired to Paris to remonstrate concerning the late outrages; but he possessed neither ability, decision, nor intrepidity to intimidate his enemies; firmness or consistency to give confidence to his friends. After being favourably received by the constitutionalists, he was severely censured by the Girondists and jacobins, for leaving the army without permission, and attempting to govern the assembly by intimidation. He left Paris privately; commissaries were sent from the assembly to arrest the general; he gave orders to have these deputies apprehended; finding however no disposition in his army to afford him support, he withdrew in the night to Liege; there falling into the hands of the enemy, and refusing to join the standard of the French princes, he was sent a prisoner to Namur.

Intelligence now reached Paris, that the combined armies were preparing to take the field; the national assembly endeavoured to inspire the people with an enthusiastic eagerness to oppose a confederation of despots; and with the assistance of the jacobin clubs they were successful. They decreed the country to be in danger, and published two addresses*, the one to the people of France, the other to the army, which were skilfully adapted to their respective objects, powerfully stimulated the enthusiasm of both; and demonstrated that however deficient the republican leaders might be in virtuous principles, they could ably call into action the pas-

* See State Papers, July 1792.

sions and energies of men. They soon issued a decree, declaring that all citizens qualified to bear arms, should be in a state of perfect activity. By this measure the whole order of things was completely changed; and the French became a nation of soldiers. The German potentates threatening the subjugation of a powerful people, drove the objects of their invasion, to the ferocious energy of a military democracy. On the 14th of July, vast bodies of federates arrived in the metropolis, at the invitation of the jacobin leaders, to celebrate the third anniversary of the revolution. Among others a troop from Marseilles repaired to Paris, to participate of the uproar and confusion, which they expected to arise from the celebration. They happened to arrive too late for the anniversary, but in sufficient time to produce disorder and tumult. They rendered their first homage to Petion who was now restored to his office, and were received with great kindness by that magistrate, whose duty it was to drive them from the metropolis. They commenced their operations with attacking a party of national guards who were dining at a tavern, and whom they supposed to be attached to the king; killing one and wounding five, they paid their respects to the national assembly*; and were very graciously received by the republicans. Visiting the jacobins they partook of the fraternal embrace, and were admitted members of the club. Small as the qualification of voters denominated active citizens was, yet the number of those who were not included was very

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1792.

Anniver-
sary of the
14th of
July.

The Mar-
seillois.

* Otridge's Annual Register, 1792, chap. 11.

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1792.

Passive
citizens.

The Mayor
of Paris in
the name of
his consti-
tuents, de-
mands the
deposition
of the king.

great, and fast increasing from prevalent idleness and profligacy. These consisting of beggars, vagabonds, and the meanest classes of ruffians, thieves, robbers, and assassins, under the name of *passive citizens*, assumed to themselves the chief portion of the executive power, in the exercise of which they were instigated and guided by their friends of the jacobin clubs. The passive citizens most joyfully received the Marseillois strangers, as a co-ordinate estate, but which was soon consolidated into one body with themselves, and their supporters, while the jacobins by their affiliations, and adherents, governed the whole mass. The republicans now denominated the mountain, because they occupied the higher benches in the assembly-room, began to govern the legislature, and from this time the acts of the national assembly are to be considered as the acts of the jacobins. They proceeded in their efforts for destroying regal power; they imputed the king's refusal to sanction the two decrees, to a correspondence with the exiles and the enemy. His majesty having in a letter expressed his reprobation of the duke of Brunswick's manifesto, the assembly would not suffer this expression of his sentiments to be communicated to the public. On the 3d of August Petion demanded, in the name of the forty-eight sections into which Paris was divided, that the king should be excluded from the throne, and that the management of affairs should be entrusted to responsible ministers, until a new king should be chosen by a national convention; and on the 7th of August, Collot d'Herbois a play-actor headed a great body of passive citizens, who made the same demand to the

the national assembly. They were answered that the assembly would take the requisition into consideration. The king informed of these proceedings addressed a proclamation to the people of France, stating his own conduct and its reasons; the malicious artifices by which it was misrepresented; the situation of affairs; the union and vigour required at the present crisis*; but the assembly studiously prevented the proclamation from being dispersed. On the 9th of August†, the day appointed for considering the proposed deposition of the king, bodies of armed men surrounded the assembly-hall, menaced‡ and insulted the members whom they conceived inimical to the republican proposition. As an insurrection was threatened, the constitutional party urged Petion to employ the municipal force in preventing tumult, but no precautions were adopted. At midnight the tocsin sounded, the Marseillois joined by other insurgents marched with such arms, as they could collect, towards the Tuilleries. The council of state made vigorous and prudent dispositions for repelling the attack. The Swiss guards amounting to about a thousand, joined by other loyal and gallant men, formed themselves to resist the insurgents. In the morning the banditti broke in§; and the officers of the household encouraged the valiant defenders of the king: at first the brave champions of their sovereign repulsed the insurgents, but the rebels having corrupted the national guards,

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1792.

Proceedings
of the 10th
of August,

a banditti
assault the
Tuilleries.

* State Papers, 17th of August, 1792.

† Annual Register 1792, chap. 11. ‡ Clery, page 4.

§ See a very interesting and pathetic detail of these dreadful atrocities in Clery's journal, page 2 to 16.

E H A P.
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1792.
Valour of
the Swiss
guards;
they are
overpower-
ed and mas-
sacred by
the savage
mob;

the royal
family car-
ried pri-
soners to
the temple.

Deposition
of the king.

Plan of pro-
visionary
government
drawn up
by Brissot.

Manifestoes
to the French
people, and
to foreign
powers.

the gallant Swiss were overpowered and fell under the murderous hands of the banditti. The king was strongly importuned to send for a large body of Swiss guards stationed near Paris, which, joining their heroic countrymen, by steady and disciplined valour might have repelled the infuriate assassins. But the virtues of Louis were not those that were most fitted for encountering the very arduous situations in which he was placed. His gentle disposition was averse to the employment of greater force, as it must cause the farther effusion of blood. In his case wisdom dictated and self-preservation required stern and unyielding firmness; desperate resolution might perhaps have extricated him from his humiliating state; concession to so infuriate atrocity, was certain destruction. Louis still hoping to preserve his family sought refuge from the national assembly, the rulers of which, he well knew were seeking his ruin. The royal captives were now confined in the Temple; the palace which they had left became a scene of pillage, carnage, and desolation. The jacobins elated with their victory, proceeded to the deposition of the king; and on the 10th of August a decree was passed, suspending him from his royal functions, and retaining him as an hostage in the hands of the nation. Brissot one of the chief supporters of this revolution, proposed a provisional government until a national convention assembling should determine whether the king was to be restored or dethroned. The executive power was to be lodged in a council of the jacobin ministers lately displaced. Brissot wrote a manifesto addressed to citizens, and a declaration addressed to foreign powers, justifying the decree of the 10th of August;

August; these papers were dexterously executed, and conveyed a high idea of the ingenuity of the author; skilfully various in its efforts; the declaration to his own countrymen appealed to all their prejudices, and feelings, and passions; and through the very susceptibility of their minds, imposed on their judgment; his memorial to foreign nations employed plausible sophistry to mislead their understandings, as he could hope for less sympathy from their hearts. The first manifesto is misrepresentation in the shape of impressive eloquence; the second in the form of logical deduction; and both shew the author to have in a high degree united declamation and subtlety. While thus exerting himself for the dethronement and imprisonment of the king, this patriot was said to be carrying on a correspondence for betraying the republican party, by suffering the king to escape; but it was alleged that the bribe which he required, half a million sterling, was more than the royal coffers could afford*.

The municipality or common council of Paris, which had been lately constituted and was composed of the very dregs of the people, assumed a large share of the direction of public affairs. By their influence the chief acts of the deliberative body were determined, and through their protection and operation the executive government in a considerable degree was administered. A party of these appearing as the deputies of the people, at the bar of the assembly, demanded in the name of the people, that a national convention should be immediately called. The assembly received these counsellors very graciously,

* See Playfair's Jacobinism.

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Plan of a
convention.Persecution
of the un-
yielding
priests.Church
plate is sent
to the mint,
and the bells
are turned
into cannon.Domiciliary
visits.

and in obedience to their mandates, resolved to invite the French to form a national convention.

A plan of a convention drawn up by the Brissotines, was disseminated and recommended through the nation. Meanwhile the jacobins and the sansculotte rabble proceeded in their operations. Hitherto they had not entirely crushed the ecclesiastics, or eradicated christianity, but they rapidly proceeded in the attempt. All who continued to refuse perjury were by an act of the assembly ordered to quit the kingdom. The Council General next ordered, that all the vessels, images, and other moveables in the churches of Paris, whether gold or silver, should be sent to the mint; the church bells were turned into cannon. From monuments of religion they proceeded to monuments of monarchy: the brazen statues of the princes were converted into ordnance, and thus, it was said, were drawn over from the cause of tyranny to the cause of liberty. The next object after religion and monarchy was property. Confiscation hitherto grasping lands had not extended its rapacity in an equal degree to moveables. To supply this deficiency, they instituted what they called *domiciliary visits*, officers employed by the municipality, and accompanied by *passive citizens*, visited private houses, to search for arms; for refractory priests, or other aristocrats. According to their good pleasure they plundered the houses, arrested or even hanged the owners. Brissot in his professional capacity as editor of a newspaper, very strongly recommended and ardently promoted these *domiciliary visits*: Pétion as mayor was still more effectually active: nor was Danton as minister

minister of justice wanting with his assistance. He proposed, and by threats extorted a decree, for *walking commissaries*, who were to co-operate with the domiciliary visitors. Whoever should refuse to give up his arms, or to serve in the army at the requisition of the said commissaries, was to be declared a traitor and punished with death, without any further enquiry. The visitors and commissaries did not murder all those whose houses they inspected; but in many instances contented themselves with sending the owners to dungeons. The prisons were become extremely full; the rulers thought it expedient to rid themselves of the captives by stirring the populace to another insurrection and massacre. For this purpose it was alleged, that as the duke of Brunswick's approach would compel the majority of the inhabitants to take the field, it would be dangerous to leave the prisons so full of aristocrats and suspected persons. By these representations the murderous rabble was easily excited to assassination. On the 2d of September the tocsin was sounded, the cannon of alarm were fired; and bands of ruffians were sent to the different prisons. They commenced their carnage with priests; two hundred and forty-four clergymen were murdered before the evening. The assassins from the ministers of religion, proceeded to the gallant defenders of fallen monarchy, and murdered the Swiss officers, that having been spared at the last massacre were now in prison. From these murders the savages betook themselves to more indiscriminate barbarity, searched the common prisons and even hospitals, butchered felons, sick, and lunatics*, as well as those who were charged with disaffection to go-

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Walking
commissa-
ries.

Massacres
of Septem-
ber.

See Annual Register for 1792, chap. 3.

U 4

vernment.

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1792.
Atrocious
barbarity
towards the
princess
Lamballe.

vernment. Among the cases which most strongly mark the enormous depravity of those brutalized barbarians, none can exceed the massacre of the princess Lamballe: this lady sprung from the house of Savoy, was distinguished for personal charms, and a character at once amiable and estimable, and had been superintendant of the queen's household. Married to a man whom she loved, she had been deprived of her husband, through the duke of Orleans*; and was now principally distinguished for her ardent and invincible attachment to her royal mistress, and her detestation of her husband's murderer. She with other attendants on her queen had been sent to prison on the 10th of August; the murderers about eight in the morning of the 3d of September, entered the apartment in which this unfortunate lady was immured. They offered to save her life, if she would fabricate charges against the queen. The heroic princess returned a resolute negative; they demanded that she should take the oath of liberty and equality, also an oath of hatred to the king, to the queen, and to royalty; the first she consented to take, but refused the last: an assassin said, swear or you are a dead woman; she looked in his face but made no reply. In an instant she was assassinated with pikes and bayonets; her cloathes were torn off, and the naked corpse exposed to the most abominable insults. With religion, justice, order, and humanity, decency and modesty fled. The head and body of the massacred lady were exposed before the windows of the royal captives, with every circumstance of brutalism, that diabolical malignity maddened to frenzy could suggest†. The murders continued for 2

* See this volume, p. 74. † See Otridge's Register, 1792.

week ; in which time the numbers of the massacred exceeded five thousand. Meanwhile the elections of the national convention were carried on under the influence of this terrible system. A circular letter from the municipality of Paris, countersigned by Danton was sent to all the other municipalities, required the approbation of the whole people to the massacres, and even recommended them to imitation ; and under such controul the election proceeded. The clergy were banished ; the higher and the most honourable of the nobility had fled, or fallen by the hands of the assassins ; the royal family in prison expected their fate ; all who favoured royalty or distinction of rank were held in abhorrence, and those who had been called passive as well as the active citizens had been declared to be eligible to all honours and offices of the state. The convention was chiefly chosen from the most violent and desperate republicans in the kingdom. The members assembled on the 20th of September ; and the next day they sanctioned the law for abolishing royalty. Having thus proscribed monarchy, and established what they termed the French republic, their next object was, to prepare for the murder of their dethroned king.

Meeting of
the national
convention.

While the French were thus occupied, their proceedings and projects afforded the highest satisfaction to democratic republicans in other countries. From England many individuals flocked to Paris, as the centre of liberty and happiness. The societies eagerly transmitted their approbation of the French revolutionists ; during the successive degradations of monarchy they had in their own country published their applause of its invaders, but when the acts of the 10th of August had deposed and imprisoned the king,

English societies address the convention with congratulations of praise ;

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king, murdered his defenders, and prostrated his power; when the busy week of September extending the massacre of aristocrats, shed the blood of the nobility, gentry, and clergy; when the national convention doing honour to its own composition, had abolished the kingly office, the English societies eagerly testified their joy and congratulations on the success of those with whose principles they declared their own to coincide, and with whose feelings they avowed the most cordial sympathy. The chief democratical clubs of England, were then *the revolution club; the society for constitutional information, both in London; and the London corresponding society affiliated with divers places through the kingdom.*

The address of the first to the national convention, the shortest of the three, restricted its applause to the 10th of August; augured happiness from the establishment of a republic on the downfall of monarchy; repeated the opinions of the late Dr. Price; to refresh the memory of revolutionists concerning the treatment of dethroned kings, alluded to the history of Charles I.; and expressed their hopes that peace and constant alliance should be established between Britain and the French republic. The address of the *society for constitutional information* approved of the deposition of the king; expressed hopes that *the same doctrines would be received, and the same example generally followed in other countries.* Having declared their sentiments in the most pompous phraseology, they accompanied their eloquence with a donation of shoes*; but the most explicit of the

accompany
their com-
mendations
with a gift
of shoes.

* The conveyance of these shoes was entrusted to Mr. John Frost attorney, who having attained notoriety by professional achievements, had become a very zealous reformer.

addresses

addresses was the production of the London Corresponding Society, and its affiliated friends; which praising the successive and various proceedings of the French republicans, reprobated the policy and constitution of Britain*. This address subscribed by Thomas Hardy shoemaker, and Maurice Margarot knife-grinder, stated divers and manifold blessings which Britons might attain by following the counsels of the said Thomas Hardy shoemaker, Maurice Margarot knife-grinder, and other politicians equally enlightened, instead of being guided by those who had so long governed Britain: the sentiments of the corresponding society devoted openly to the cause of mankind, existed; they were convinced, in the hearts of all the free men of England; they enjoyed by anticipation and with a common hope, that epoch (not far distant), when the interests of Europe and of mankind, should invite the two nations to stretch out the hand of fraternity. The convention received the addresses with very great satisfaction, and strongly expressed their expectations of a similar change in England, and their confident hopes, that they speedily would have an opportunity of congratulating their corresponding friends, on a national convention established in England: the convention conferred the honour of citizenship on various individuals belonging to other countries, and some of the departments chose for their representatives such Englishmen as they conceived proper delegates for expressing their doctrines and sentiments. Of these the most noted was Thomas Paine, and the most eminent was Dr.

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The corresponding society by its secretary Thomas Hardy shoemaker invites the French republic to fraternity with Britain.

The convention believes the boasts of such reformers, that they speak the voice of the British nation.

* See the respective addresses Appendix of Otridge's Annual Register 1792, pages 70, 72, 73.

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Priestley ; this gentleman was so greatly pleased with the two-fold honours conferred on him, by being thus naturalized by the anarchists, and even deemed worthy of a place in their convention, that he wrote letters both to the convention and individual members, manifesting and declaring the warmest approbation of their principles, as displayed in the suppression of monarchy and the privileged orders, and the whole series of revolutionary proceedings : though his age and other circumstances prevented him from accepting a seat himself, he with the greatest thankfulness and joy accepted it for his son. The convention flattered with the approbation of one whom they conceived to be as great in political philosophy, as he really was in physical, ordered his letter to be transcribed into their records, as a testimony of the applause bestowed by foreign illumination on their powerful efforts for the destruction of establishments ; they charged their president to inform their panegyrists that they would with pleasure receive any reflections which he, from the stores of his wisdom, might transmit to an assembly whose sentiments coincided with his own. With these testimonies of approbation from British democrats, the convention fancied, as indeed did many of the democrats themselves, that the voice of the British nation was in their favour, and that Joseph Priestley dissenting minister, Thomas Hardy dissenting shoemaker, Thomas Paine cashiered exciseman and deist, Maurice Margarot knife-grinder and deist, in conveying their own praises of the destruction of rank, property, and monarchy, including the massacres of

This belief
influences
their political
conduct.

of August and September, echoed the feelings of all free Britons, and that they might soon expect through the British people, the co-operation of the British force. Pleased with attestations, of which they so much over-rated the value, the convention proceeded in a series of measures no less conformable to their own sentiments, than those of their panegyrists. Their operations were directed principally to two objects, plunder and regicide.

The first head comprehended the farther extension of confiscation, and also the convertibility of the objects thus seized into gold and silver; which they found much more current than the assignats. The second consisted of resolutions, decrees, charges, and witnesses, which they were preparing, that in the eyes of their deluded votaries they might give some colour of legality to the murder of their king. In order to accumulate gold and silver, they saw other countries might be rendered extremely productive; for that purpose it was deemed expedient to combine fraud with robbery. Agents were sent to London, Amsterdam, Madrid, and other opulent cities, with orders to negotiate bills on Paris, payable in assignats. Those bills being discounted in foreign countries, the value in specie was remitted to France: when they became due, they were paid according to the course of exchange; but before this could be converted into cash, assassins were hired to patrol the streets, and threaten all those who sold gold and silver*; thus

* The gold and silver were sold by porters in the streets, some of whom sold for their own account, but most of them for moneyed men, who did not appear. See Playfair's History of Jacobinism.

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Schemes of the convention for procuring the property of other countries.

the

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the payers were either obliged to take their paper money or a much less sum in coin than that which had been remitted from the discount; and by every operation of this kind the quantity of specie of France was increased. In managing this traffic, the jacobins, proceeding with their usual energy and rapidity, rendered it extremely extensive and productive, before merchants and their bill-brokers discovered its hurtful result, and before political causes put an end to the neutrality through which it was effected. The convention, with much ease, amassed immense quantities of gold and silver, both into the public treasury, and into the private coffers of the leaders. The other chief object, the murder of the king, they pursued with the most iniquitous vigour and perseverance.

Progress of
the duke of
Brunswick.

Meanwhile, the Prussian army advanced on the left towards Thionville, and the Austrian army on the right through Luxemburgh, in order to join it on the confines of France. The Austrian general reduced Longvy: the armies, after their junction, captured Verdun, and besieged Thionville. The French executive government displayed great vigour and judgment in its exertions and dispositions for resisting and repelling the invasion. The frontier fortresses, which, not without probable reason, they deemed purposely neglected by the royal officers, they strengthened as well as time and circumstances would permit, but trusted their principal defence to more inland posts. Dumourier being appointed general, undertook to defend the passes between Lorrain and Champaign, with a force much inferior to the German host. Roland, minister for the home department, issued a proclamation

proclamation for carrying off provision and forage, cutting down trees, and forming abbatis to impede the march of the enemy. Leaving the sieges to detachments, the combined troops advanced towards Champaign, and found that the people, far from co-operating, were unanimous and zealous in annoying the invaders. Sicknefs and want of provisions began to pervade the combined armies : still, however, they persevered in advancing. They found Dumourier posted at St. Menchoud, a strong defile in Champaign. They attacked his front division, but were repulsed. A negociation was opened on the 22d of September, between Dumourier and the king of Prussia, but news arriving of the abolition of monarchy, it was broken off. Dumourier now received daily reinforcements. The duke of Brunswick and the king of Prussia perceiving the strength of the enemy before them, and knowing every thing behind them was hostile, fearing to be hemmed in, proposed to retreat. The Austrian general deprecated this movement, but as his command was only subordinate, he was obliged to comply. On the 30th of September these denouncers of conquest were compelled to measure back their steps ; and, on their rout, being annoyed by the French army, lost numbers of their men, and a great part of their baggage. Abandoning their conquests; by the 18th of October they completely evacuated France. Thus ended the confederate invasion, which excited great hopes, poured out splendid promises and imperious threats, but performed nothing. It was soon found to have materially injured the cause of the allies : the flight of the enemy, after such boasts, operating on the susceptibility of the

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1792.
He enters
France, and
advances
towards
Champaign.

Dumourier,
the French
general,
occupies a
strong position.

The Duke
of Brun-
swick re-
treats.

Elation of
the French.

the

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1792.

Dumourier enters the Netherlands, defeats his enemy at Jemappe, and reduces the country.

the French character, elevated their spirits, and turned the military energy which defence had excited to offence and invasion. It was speedily resolved to enter Belgium. Dumourier made rapid and effective preparations in provisions, artillery, and troops elated with recent success. In the beginning of November he entered the Austrian Netherlands; on the fifth of the month attacked the Austrian army in its camp at Jemappe, gained a complete and decisive victory. He successively reduced the various cities of Flanders and Brabant; before the middle of the month was master of Brussels; and in less than another month had totally subdued the Austrian Netherlands, except Luxemburg. General Custine having invaded Germany, captured the cities of Worms, Spire, and Mentz; subjugated all the country between the Rhine and the Moselle, except Coblenz; crossing the Rhine, he also reduced Frankfort.

The French propose to conquer and revolutionize all neighbouring states.

These rapid acquisitions operating upon the volatile minds of the French, inspired them immediately with the desire of unbounded conquest. They became as eager to sacrifice the rights and properties of other nations to their ambition and rapacity, as they were to seize the rights and properties of their fellow-subjects. They resolved to preserve or annul treaties, without regard to national faith or to justice, as best suited the boundless advancement of their power. Such being their end, their means were at once simple and comprehensive: with their own immense force, to employ in their service the disaffection, caprice, and folly of individuals and bodies in other countries. The susceptibility so often remarked in the French character, appeared in credulity,

dulity, or the ready admission of assertions and allegations, as well as in sympathetic accessibility to sentiments and doctrines. A desire of indefinite change had gone abroad through the world; and prevalent as this passion really was, the French both conceived and believed it to be universal. In Germany and the Netherlands, where it was actually frequent, they supposed it paramount and irresistible, from hatred to arbitrary power and oppression; in England they apprehended it to be equally dominant, as an emanation from the national spirit of liberty. The praises bestowed by eminent statesmen on their efforts to overthrow despotism, they construed into an unqualified approbation of their levelling system. Hearing of the rapid dissemination of the work of Paine, they imputed the reception of these new theories to a desire of applying them to practice. The addresses which they received from obscure clubs, they, on the authority of the addressers, believed to speak the voice of the British people. The three last panegyrics of the reforming societies more specifically expressing a desire of copying the example of France, strengthened their assurance of British sympathy. The last and strongest of these banished all doubts that Britain desired to fraternize with France, in establishing democracy, and levelling ranks and distinctions. So little proportion is there often found in political history between the importance of instruments and effects, that a great scheme of French policy, directly hostile to all established governments, and one of the chief causes which involved Britain in a continental war, is to be traced to the ignorant vanity of the meanest mechanics, seeking importance

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Noted decree of November 19th, encouraging foreign nations to revolutionize.

out of their respective spheres. Believing that Thomas Hardy a shoe-maker, and other worthies of equal political consequence, represented the people of Great Britain, and that the people of other nations concurred to encourage and stimulate subversion of establishment, on the 19th of November 1792, in direct and open contradiction to their former professions, not to interfere in the internal government of other states, the convention passed, by *acclamation*, a decree*, "That the national convention declare, in the name of the French nation, that they will grant fraternity and assistance to all those people who wish to procure liberty; and that they charge the executive power to send orders to their generals to give assistance to such people as have suffered, or are now suffering, in the cause of liberty." This decree confirmed a suspicion which had been entertained from their preceding conduct, that the fomentation of sedition and insurrection in foreign countries, was a systematic principle † of the French republic, immediately produced jealousy and caution in neighbouring nations, and determined most of them to prohibit all intercourse with the French revolutionists. The course of French conquests having led Dumourier to the Scheldt, soon manifested their principles of justice. Their first act, after the reduction

* See Proceedings of the National Convention, November 19th, 1792.

† Most of our readers will probably recollect the noted saying of Brissot, that they must set fire to the four quarters of the globe. I am assured, by a gentleman who was then at Paris, and very intimate with the Girondists, that this was the general language and intent.

of

of the Austrian Netherlands, was to open the navigation of the Scheldt, in contravention to the most sacred treaties, guaranteed by Britain, France herself, and the neighbouring powers. As Holland was so intimately connected with Britain, their conduct was a peculiar attack upon this country, and shewed that they were resolved to include Britain in a general system of aggressive hostility. With the designs of France, so inimical to the English government, a spirit of disaffection and innovation at home powerfully co-operated.

During the recess of 1792, the public ferment greatly increased in this country. The efforts of the revolutionary emissaries became more strenuous in London, and in the other great cities of England. Government had been so completely overturned in France, and the possession of power and property had been so entirely attained by the revolutionary banditti, that their courage and audacity were beyond all bounds. The retreat of the Duke of Brunswick; a retreat not displeasing to some even of the moderate friends of freedom, to those, at least, who considered the good of real liberty more than the phantom that had assumed its name in France, greatly emboldened the democratical republicans of England, who admired that phantom. About the capital the approaching downfall of the British constitution became a subject of common talk: king, lords, and commons, church and state, were described as on the eve of dissolution. The garrulous vanity of some of the weak and ignorant members of the democratic societies boasted of the situations they were to attain under the new order which was to be

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1792.
The French open the Scheldt, contrary to treaties with Britain.

Effects in Britain from French doctrines and proceedings.

Anti-constitutional ferment during the recess of 1792.

English republicans confidently hope for a change.

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Alarm of
many
friends of the
constitution.

Mr.
Reeves's
association
against
republicans
and levellers,

is very gene-
rally joined,
and gives an
important
turn to pub-
lic opinion.

speedily established. From a multiplicity of circumstances it was evident, that a design was formed to overthrow the constitution, and that there was great confidence of its success. That such proceedings required to be checked, controuled, and punished, could not be denied by any who possessed just notions of the nature of man in his social state: government employed such measures as appeared to be the best calculated to correct this growing and threatening mischief. But though the arm of law be sufficiently strong to restrain the open invader of the constitution, it was not altogether able to ferret all the secret arts of its enemies. It became necessary, therefore, to aid the efforts of law by employing their own weapons against the adversaries of our establishments. As the approaches were carried on by societies, clubs, and familiar books, suited to the meanest capacities, it became a public duty to establish associations, and prepare literary works, which might oppose these hostile attacks. An association was accordingly instituted in November, by a gentleman of the law named Mr. Reeves, for the avowed purpose of protecting liberty and property against republicans and levellers. The framer's address, stating with great perspicuity and force the multiplied and pernicious efforts of enemies to our laws and constitution, and calling on all loyal and patriotic men to unite in the defence of every thing that could be dear to Britons, made a very deep and rapid impression, and spread a general alarm. Associations for preserving the constitution multiplied in every part of the kingdom, and were joined by far the greater number of respectable Britons. These associations

associations had a most powerful effect in counter-acting the seditious societies; they recalled the well-meaning but misguided votaries of innovation, to the recollection of the blessings that were ascertained by experience, diffused a spirit of constitutional loyalty through the country, and brought back the stream of popular opinion into the old and useful channel. Mr. Reeves's exhortations to patriotic and loyal union were accompanied with books explaining the hurtful effects of the Gallic changes; and though some of these, in reproaching levelling democracy, may have urged to the contrary extreme, yet the main operation was highly salutary*: the whole measure prevented or recovered great numbers of Britons from Jacobinism, which was then the impending danger; and its certain consequence, if allowed to flourish, the subversion of the British constitution. Before public opinion had received so salutary a bias, the seditious practices had, in various parts, produced such disorders as to render the interference of the executive government necessary. The king availed himself of his legal power to embody the militia, and to convene the parliament before the time to which it had been prorogued, and to call on the representative wisdom of the people for counsel and aid at so

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The king embodies the militia; and, at such a crisis, summons parliament before the appointed time.

* For instance, *A Letter from Thomas Bull to his Brother John*, though it employed some of the exploded sentiments and phraseology of tory bigotry, yet taught the common people the mischiefs of innovating speculations; and that their respectability and happiness depended not upon political theories, but on their practical performance of their professional, moral, and religious duties.

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momentous a crisis. At this eventful period some of the most distinguished supporters of opposition, deeming the present a season of alarm and danger when all party spirit should subside, when all party contentions should cease, and when all men of all parties should unite to support the constitutional government of the country, considered our external as well as internal enemies to be of a species which never yet had been encountered; and that no weapon could so effectually oppose their diabolical designs as an unanimous and determined spirit of resistance: they therefore supported the present measures of administration.

CHAP. L.

Meeting of parliament.—The king states his reasons for this extraordinary convocation.—The chief subjects of consideration the progress of Jacobinical principles.—The greater number of peers and commoners conceive there is a design to revolutionize Britain.—A small but able band think this alarm unfounded.—Conduct of France comes before parliament.—Peace the interest and wish of Britain, if it could be preserved with security.—Commercial policy of the minister, and unprecedented prosperity of the country.—The British government observed a strict neutrality during the hostilities between France and Germany.—Communication between Lord Grenville and the French ambassador in summer 1792.—On the deposition of the king of the French, our sovereign orders his ambassador to leave Paris.—This order a necessary consequence of our king's determination of neutrality.—Careful avoidance of interference in the internal affairs of France.—Application of the emperor and king of Naples to his Britannic majesty to refuse shelter to murderers.—Strict adherence to neutrality by Britain.—Aggressions on the part of France.—Chauvelin opens an explanatory negotiation.—Maret, the French secretary, comes to London to confer with Mr. Pitt.—Maret justifies, on revolutionary principles, the opening of the Scheldt, though contrary to the established law of nations.—Mr. Chauvelin supports the same doctrine in his correspondence with Lord Grenville—proffers the decree of November 19th not intended against Britain.—Reply of the British minister.—He declares Britain will not suffer France to annul at pleasure the established law of nations.—Britain requires France to forego her projects of invading and revolutionizing other countries.—Alien bill—is passed into a law.—Augmentation of the army and navy.—Pre-

ceedings at Paris.—Gironde party—their literary ability, boundless ambition, and wild projects.—The Mountain blood-thirsty and ferocious.—Robespierre, Danton, and Marat.—The Girondists desire to spare the king's life.—The mountain and the mob desire regicide.—Puffanimity of Brissot and the other Girondists.—A decree is passed for bringing the king to trial.—Attempts to break the spirit of Louis—trial—not the smallest proof of guilt.—Complicated iniquity of the process in principle, substance, and mode.—Self-possession and magnanimity of the persecuted monarch.—Sentence.—Last interview of Louis with his family.—Execution—an awful monument of the doctrines and sentiments that governed France.—Chauvelin demands from the British minister the recognition of the French republic—and the admission of its ambassador.—The British government refuses a recognition which would be an interference in the internal affairs of France.—Chauvelin remonstrates against the alien bill and the preparations of Britain—on the massacre of Louis ordered to leave the country.—France declares war against Britain and Holland.—Review of the conduct of both parties.—Opinions of Messrs. Burke, Fox, and Pitt respectively, on the French revolution—the justice and policy of a war.—Messrs. Burke and Pitt support the war on different grounds.—Mr. Pitt proposes the security of Britain—Mr. Burke the restoration of monarchy in France.—Violent party censures.—Impartial history finds in the conduct of neither just grounds for their reciprocal reproach.—Public opinion favourable to war with France.—In declaring war against France our king spoke the voice of a great majority of his people.

CHAP. ON the 13th of December parliament was assembled; and the king stated his various reasons for his present measures. Notwithstanding the strict neutrality which he had uniformly observed in the war now raging on the continent, he could not, without

L.
 1792.
 Meeting of
 parli. ment.
 The king
 states his
 reasons for

without concern, observe the strong indications of an intention in the French to excite disturbances in other countries ; to pursue views of conquest and aggrandizement inconsistent with the balance of Europe ; to disregard the rights of neutral powers ; and to adopt towards his allies the States General measures neither conformable to the public law, nor to the positive articles of existing treaties. He had, therefore, found it necessary to make some augmentation of his army and navy : these exertions were demanded by the present state of affairs, to maintain internal tranquillity, and render a temperate and firm conduct effectual for preserving the blessings of peace.

Never did more momentous objects engage the attention of a British legislature than in the present session of parliament. Its many and complicated subjects of deliberation, however, chiefly resulted from two subjects which were interwoven together, the operation of Jacobinical principles, and the advances of French power. Ministers, supported not only by those members who for many years approved of their measures, but by most of the principal nobility of the old whig interest, Mr. Burke, the veteran champion of that party, and many other gentlemen of the house of commons, also, many members of the North part of the coalition, especially Lord Loughborough, now Chancellor, declared their conviction that a design existed to revolutionize this country ; and that notwithstanding the precautions which were already employed, still constant vigilance, prudence, firmness, and energy, was necessary to prevent its success. It had not hitherto,

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1792.
this extra-
ordinary
convocation

Chief sub-
jects of
deliberation
the progress
of Jacobini-
cal principles
and French
power.

The greater
number of
peers and
commoners
conceive
there is a
design to
revolution-
ize Britain.

C H A P. they admitted, produced such overt acts as to afford grounds for judicial process; but had discovered, and even manifested, such objects and tendencies as demanded the counteraction of deliberative wisdom. There were intentions and schemes openly avowed, with many more reasonably suspected, for effecting the downfall of the existing establishments; although no specific treasonable plot had been actually brought to light, the evidence for the existence of such projects consisted of conversations, writings, specific proceedings, and general conduct. To repress such views and attempts, preventive and prospective measures were proposed, and not retrospective or penal.

*A small but
able hand
think this
alarm un-
founded.*

A small but very able band, headed by Mr. Fox, ridiculed and reprobated this apprehension; they said it was a mere chimera, like the Popish plot of Titus Oates; that it sprang from the eloquent misrepresentations of Mr. Burke's invectives against the French revolution, and was supported by ministers to promote an alarm; divide the whigs; oppose the spirit of liberty and the reform of parliament, and facilitate hostility with France. These were the respective positions of the bodies which now differed in Parliament on the subject of internal danger. Mr. Fox and his adherents called for specific instances of conspiracy; and alleged, that since none were produced, the pretended schemes and projects did not exist; that every general imputation must be an aggregate of particular facts, or must be false; that the deduction of probable practice from speculative theories was inconsistent with sound reason and experience, and totally un-

worthy of a legislature. Must parliament interfere whenever a hot-brained enthusiast writes or speaks nonsense? for the ostensible purposes of ministry, their arguments were futile; but for their real purposes their assertions and actions were well adapted. At the commencement of the session Mr. Pitt was absent, his seat being vacated by his acceptancy of the Cinque Ports. The chief impugner of these arguments of Mr. Fox and his friends was Mr. Burke, who shewing the connection between opinion and conduct, insisted that the strongest preventive policy was necessary to the salvation of Britain.

Meanwhile the conduct of France towards this country, with the part which Britain should act in the present emergency, was a subject of anxious concern to the parliament and nation. To a commercial country deriving its prosperity from its industry and arts, cherished by peace, war was an evil to be incurred from no motive but necessity. The extension of commerce, manufactures, and every other source of private wealth and public revenue, though very far from exclusively occupying the official talents of Mr. Pitt, had hitherto been the most constantly prominent objects of his administration. He had promoted trade by the wisest and most efficacious means, removal of restraint, and reciprocation of profit. His exertions had been eminently successful where legislative or ministerial effort was necessary, and when no political interference was wanted, the national capital, enterprise, and skill, nourished by freedom, and secured by peace, had done the rest. The prosperity of the country

CHAPTER
L.
1792.

Conduct of France comes before parliament.

Peace the interest and wish of Britain, if it could be preserved with security.

Commercial policy of the minister, and unprecedented prosperity of the country.

C H A P.

L

1792.
The British
government
observed
a strict
neutrality
during the
hostilities
between
France and
Germany.

Communi-
cations be-
tween Lord
Grenville
and the
French
ambassador
in summer,
1792.

country was beyond the precedent of any former time, and was evidently more abundant from the advantages of neutrality in the midst of surrounding war. The British government was fully aware of the blessings of peace, and the British sovereign had uniformly adhered to the strictest neutrality, and also to a rigid forbearance from any interference in the internal affairs of France. As soon as the king of France had announced to Britain the commencement of a war between the German powers and his dominions, the court of London issued a proclamation, enjoining his majesty's subjects to receive no commission from any enemy of the French king; and in no way to act hostilely to him or his people, under the severest penalties*. His majesty's subjects observed these injunctions, and no complaint of aggression was alleged either by the French king or nation. Chauvelin, the French ambassador, applied to the British secretary on the 24th of May, stating, that the proclamation published a few days before against seditious writings, contained expressions which might, contrary to the intentions of the British ministry, encourage an idea that France was considered as inimical to the internal tranquillity of England, and requested his application might be communicated to parliament. Lord Grenville's reply represented that Mr. Chauvelin had deviated (he was convinced unintentionally) from the rules of this kingdom, in applying to the British minister to communicate to parliament any subject of diplomatic discussion; but assured the

* See Debrett's State Papers, 25th May, 1792.

French minister of the cordiality of the British sovereign. Chauvelin acknowledged his mistake, and expressed his satisfaction at the assurances of amity which the British minister's answers had conveyed. On the 18th of June Mr. Chauvelin delivered a note, stating that by the proceedings of the German potentates, the balance of Europe, the independence of the different powers, the general peace, every consideration which at all times has fixed the attention of the English government, was at once exposed and threatened; and inviting his Britannic majesty, for the general security, to interfere with his mediation. His majesty adhering rigidly to the neutrality, replied, that consistently with his impartial determination, he could not propose an intervention when not solicited by both parties.* On the 11th of July 1792, a small fleet sailed from Portsmouth, under the command of admiral lord Hood, to perform naval evolutions in the channel. The whole squadron consisted only of five ships of the line, besides frigates and sloops: it had but a fortnight's provision on board, and had manifestly no other destination than a sea review. The matter, however, was so magnified in France, and was represented in such a false light, that on the 26th of July, an immediate armament of thirty ships of the line was proposed in the national assembly, and the marine committee was ordered to draw up a report on the subject, and present it within a few

* See the series of correspondence between Lord Grenville and Mr. Chauvelin, in Debrett's state papers, from May 24, to July 8th, 1792.

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1792.

On the deposition of the king of the French, our sovereign orders his ambassador to leave Paris.

This order a necessary consequence of our determination of neutrality.

Careful avoidance of interference in the internal affairs of France.

days*. But Mr. Chauvelin having enquired into the object and circumstances of this squadron, was satisfied that its purpose was not hostile; and the French government and nation were convinced that Britain had no design of taking any part with their enemies†. His Britannic majesty being informed of the suspension of the king's executive power by the decree of the 10th of August, directed his secretary of state||, Mr. Dundas, to write to lord Gower the British ambassador at Paris, that the exercise of the executive power having been withdrawn from his Christian majesty, the credentials of the ambassador were no longer valid, and that he should return to England. This order his majesty deemed a necessary consequence from his determination of neutrality‡; because the continuance of his representative at Paris, treating as the sovereign power that party which had overturned the constitution recently established, would have been an interference in the internal affairs of France, by an acknowledgement of the republican party, in preference to the loyalists and constitutionalists. Our king, conformably to the same cautious and discriminating policy, which would not pledge to the one side his virtual support, repeated his decla-

* See the *Moniteur*, 28th July, 1792.

† See *Moniteurs* of July 1792, and *Marsh's History of the Politics of Great Britain and France*, chapter 8.

|| Lord Grenville happening to be out of town when this intelligence arrived, that part of his official business was performed by his colleague.

‡ The reader will see the arguments on this subject minutely and accurately detailed in *Marsh's history of the politics of Great Britain and France*.

rations, that he would not support the other, or in any way interfere in the internal arrangements of France*. Lord Gower having communicated his royal master's orders, and the reasons wherein they were founded, to Mr. Le Brun, minister for foreign affairs, he expressed the regret of the executive council that the ambassador was to be withdrawn, but its satisfaction at his majesty's continued assurance of neutrality, and determination not to interfere in the internal affairs of France†. In the month of September, the emperor and king of Naples stated to his Britannic majesty their apprehensions, that the atrocities of Paris would extend to the lives of the royal family, and expressed their hopes, that should such a nefarious crime be committed, his majesty would grant no asylum to the perpetrators‡. With a request so conformable to justice, humanity, a sense of moral obligation, and an abhorrence of enormous wickedness, the king complied, and induced his allies the States General to form the same resolution. Here there was certainly no deviation from neutrality, no interference in the constitution of the French polity, unless a declared purpose to refuse shelter to a party that shall commit an atrocious murder, be an interference in that party's private concerns. When the theatre of advancing conquest approached so near the united Netherlands, the king declared his resolution to ad-

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1792.

Application
of the
emperor
and king of
Naples to his
Britannic
majesty
to refuse
shelter to
murderers.

* See Debrett's state papers, 17th August, 1792.

† Brissot and his party deemed the recall of the ambassador a hostile step; but admitted there had been none before. See Marsh, chap. ix.

‡ Debrett's state papers, September 20th.

here

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1792.
Strict ad-
herence to
neutrality
by Britain.

Aggression
on the part
of France.

here to their mutual alliance, and at the same time expressed his conviction that the belligerent parties would not violate the neutrality of the States General. From the time of the deposition of the king, Chauvelin could not properly be considered as ambassador from the monarch of France. Nevertheless the British government not only permitted him to reside in London, but even negotiated with him when he was agent for the executive council; and lord Grenville assured him "that outward forms would be no hindrance to his Britannic majesty, whenever the question related to explanations, which might be satisfactory and advantageous to both parties;" and Mr. Pitt declared to the same gentleman, that it was his desire to avoid a war, and to receive a proof of the same sentiments from the French ministry *. MR. PITT AND HIS COADJUTORS WERE UNIFORMLY CONSISTENT IN MAINTAINING ONE PRINCIPLE, THAT THE INTERNAL CHANGES OF FRANCE DID NOT PRECLUDE AMITY WITH ENGLAND; and therein totally differed from Mr. Burke and his followers. No communications material to the question of aggression passed between Mr. Chauvelin and the British minister, until the decree of the 19th of November, the invasion of the rights of our allies, and the rapid advances of French conquest, aroused and alarmed Britain. There had

* These declarations of our two ministers are acknowledged by Brissot, in his report to the convention of the 12th of January 1793; and in the official revolutionary journal, the *Moniteur* of 15th January, 1793.

hitherto.

hitherto been strict neutrality, as we have seen, on the part of England, while there had been aggression on the part of France; for that aggression satisfaction was due, and the French professed to wish a pacific adjustment. Chauvelin was instructed to open an explanatory negotiation, conformable to those professions. Ostensibly to promote this purpose, Mr. Maret, now foreign minister of France, came himself to England, to confer with Mr. Pitt. In the uniform spirit of neutrality which Britain observed, his majesty avoided discussing the diplomatic capacity of the ministers who were sent by the executive council of France; because an admission of their official character would import the admission of the executorial competency of their employers; would have been a declaration in favour of a party, and consequently an interference in the internal arrangements of France. Mr. Pitt therefore did not meet Mr. Maret as the minister of England the minister of France; however they did meet, and their conversation, as detailed from Mr. Maret's communication*, shewed on the one hand, that MR. PITT EARNESTLY DESIRED TO PRESERVE PEACE WITH FRANCE; and on the other, that the French agent endeavoured to explain the obnoxious decree as not intended to apply to Britain. On the subject of the Scheldt, Maret stated that the order of the council, and the decree of the national convention concerning that navigation, founded on the most sacred principles of

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1792.
Aggression on the part of France; Chauvelin opens an explanatory negotiation. Maret, the French secretary comes to London, to confer with Mr. Pitt.

Maret justifies on revolutionary principles the opening of the Scheldt,

* By Mr. Miles, in a work entitled *Authentic correspondence*. Mr. Miles was the intimate and confidential friend of Mr. Maret.

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1791.
though con-
trary to the
established
law of
nations.

Mr. Chauve-
lin supports
the same
doctrine in
his corres-
pondence
with Lord
Grenville,

and
professes
the decree
of 19th
Nov. not
intended
against
Britain.

Gallic liberty, were irrevocable, and thus admitted that the internal change in France was by its votaries considered as authorizing them to violate the rights of foreign and independent nations; and that they were resolved to make no satisfaction for an injury inflicted, in conformity to this principle*.

The same questions were agitated with much greater particularity of detail, and reciprocation of argument, between Monsieur Chauvelin and Lord Grenville, in the latter end of November, and during the month of December. Chauvelin maintained the right of the French to open the navigation of the Scheldt: he however declared, by order of the executive council, that if at the end of the war the Belgians were unfettered, and in full possession of their liberty relinquished this navigation, the French would decline all opposition. This answer evinced a firm and unalterable resolution of adhering not only to the infraction of the treaty of Utrecht, but also of dismembering the Netherlands from the Austrian dominions, and making them dependent on France; he obstinately contended that the decree of the 19th of November could have no reference to Great Britain, and declared that if Holland continued to observe neutrality, France would not invade her dominions. These professions the British minister would not believe, because they were totally contradicted by actual conduct. Concerning the decree of the convention, the application of these principles to the British

* See Maret's letter to his colleague. Debrett's state papers, 2d December, 1792.

Reply of
the British
minister.

He declares
Britain will
not suffer
France to
annul at
pleasure the
established
law of
nations.

Britain
requires
France to
forego her
projects of
invading
and revolu-
tionizing
other
countries.

king's intentions was unequivocally shewn, by the public reception given to the promoters of sedition in this country, and by the speeches made to them precisely at the time of this decree, and since on several different occasions. At the very time France declared she would not invade Holland, she had already attacked that nation by opening the Scheldt. France, (said the British minister) can have no right to annul the stipulations relative to the Scheldt, unless she have also the right to set aside equally all the other treaties, between all the powers of Europe, and all the other rights of England, or of her allies. She can even have no pretence to interfere in the question of opening the Scheldt, unless she were the sovereign of the Low Countries, or had the right to dictate laws to all Europe. England will never consent that France shall arrogate the power of annulling at her pleasure, and under the pretence of a pretended natural right, of which she makes herself the only judge, the political system of Europe, established by solemn treaties, and guaranteed by the consent of all the powers. This government, adhering to the maxims which it has followed for more than a century, will also never see with indifference that France shall make herself, either directly or indirectly, sovereign of the Low Countries, or general arbitress of the rights and liberties of Europe. If France is really desirous of maintaining friendship and peace with England, she must shew herself disposed to renounce her views of aggression and aggrandisement, and to confine herself within her own territory, without insulting other governments, disturbing their tranquillity, and

C H A P. L. violating their rights*; but the French government positively refused to satisfy Britain for the violation of treaties†.

1792.

In the consideration of peace or war with the French republic, the proceedings of the French rulers, the negotiation between their agents and British ministers, and the conduct of our executive and legislative government, are so much interwoven, that it is frequently necessary to change the scene to review their process of action and re-action, and exhibit cause and effect. Before we follow this negotiation to its close, it is necessary to present to our readers, both internal legislative proceedings, and foreign acts, by which the negotiation was affected. The great objects of alarm, both to the British government, and to the principal part of the British nation, were the rapid advances of French principles, and the rapid progress of French power. The number of aliens at this time in Britain, far surpassed the usual influx. Of these, many so conducted themselves as to justify a suspicion of their evil intentions towards this country. Agreeably to the system of preventive policy already recorded, the attorney general proposed to parliament to provide for the public tranquillity by subjecting the resort and residence of aliens to certain regulations. All foreigners arriving in the kingdom were, by the plan of ministers, to explain their reasons for coming into this country, to give up all arms except those commonly

Alien bill,

* See correspondence between Lord Grenville and Mr. Chauvelin, in December 1792. State papers for that period.

† See Chauvelin's note to Lord Grenville, Dec. 27th.

used

used for defence or dress. In their several removals through the country, they were to use passports, by which their actual residence, or occasional movements might be manifest, and their conduct easily observed. Those who received eleemosynary support, were to be distributed in districts where they would be more liable to the vigilance of the civil power. Particular attention was to be paid to foreigners who had visited this kingdom within the present year, who should hereafter come without obvious reasons, and be thus more obnoxious to prudent suspicion. Such were the objects and chief provisions of the law known by the name of the *alien bill*. Those members of both houses who had denied the existence of the dangerous doctrines, consistently with their opinions, opposed a measure, which upon their hypothesis was certainly not necessary. Admitting, however, that there was external danger from abroad, they unanimously agreed to ministerial motions for the augmentation of the army and navy.

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1792.

is passed
into a law.

Augmenta-
tion of the
army and
navy.

Proceedings
at Paris.

While the British legislature was making these dispositions against internal and foreign danger, an event took place in France, the flagrant injustice and ferocious cruelty of which most fatally manifested the pitch of infuriate wickedness at which the Jacobins were arrived. The republicans now consisted of two parties, the Girondists and the Mountain. The former contained the principal part of the literary class, ingenious, and eloquent enemies of monarchy; the latter, the most daring and blood-thirsty directors of the murderous mobs, the votaries of anarchy. Though men of genius, the leaders

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1792.
Gironde
party:their literary
ability,
boundless
ambition,
and wild
projects.

of the Gironde were much more brilliant than solid *. Formed to the metaphysical theories long so prevalent in France, they carried their visionary abstractions to practical life. To subtle paradox and ingenious hypothesis, which are commonly the effusions of literary retirement, many of them joined profligate corruption and rapacity, that would grasp all the wealth and power which stimulate injustice in the active world, with an excessive vanity, which represented all the objects of their cupidity as within the reach of their invention and enterprize. This wildness of speculative sciolism, this depravity of principle and pursuit, and this overweening self-estimation dictated their internal and external politics; impelled them to seek a republic not suitable to the human character; in which levelling others, they might themselves enjoy boundless riches and unlimited sway; and to fancy that their talents and address could employ both the weakness and strength of various parties, in their own and other countries as instruments for the execution of their designs. To extend the circle of their proposed dominion, and also that pre-eminence which Frenchmen have always sought, they formed their boundless schemes of national aggrandizement †; of embroiling mankind in war; subjugating all countries by French principles and French power, and thus subjecting

* The chief philosophical scholar among them was Condorcet. Brissot was animated, enthusiastic, and operative, but by no means profound.

† See Brissot's works passim; also the writings of other Girondists.

the whole to themselves; new as these men were in some part of the composition of their characters, yet in others as old as vanity, avarice, and profligacy, they transcended every bound of morality or religion. Possessing great energy they in a considerable degree attained, and for a short time preserved the objects of their desire; but wanting profound wisdom, and over-rating their own talents of managing tools, they ultimately fell by the instruments of their exaltation. As the great operators in the several changes of the revolution were the Parisian rabble, the demagogues who could most readily and effectually direct the mob, possessed a formidable power either instrumental or supreme according to the ability and skill of its possessors. The members of the legislature, most ferociously violent against the king, were the Mountain. These, less literary in their acquirements, less metaphysical in their harangues, exhibited in their manners a coarseness which the others, educated as gentlemen, had not been able completely to attain, and were much more popular among the governing sansculottes. The head of this party was Robespierre, a man much inferior to the Girondists in cultivated understanding, polished eloquence, and those talents which would have had weight with an ingenious and refined audience; but by the uncouth plainness of his speeches, and the energy of his invectives, he was well fitted to govern a mob at any time; and by his stern and sanguinary disposition peculiarly suited to the Parisian mob, panting for regicide. Next in power was Danton, equally blood-thirsty and ambitious, less strong and direct in his means, but more dexterous. Subordinate

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E.

1774

The Mountain blood-thirsty and ferocious.

Robespierre, Danton, and Marat.

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I.

1792.

to these was Marat ; a half-lettered editor of a newspaper, hideous in appearance, loathsome by disease*, and squalid in attire ; he was passionately desirous of reducing all eminence and distinction to the same low level with himself ; and long the hireling of Orleans, he imbibed against the king that rancorous gall which he had been paid for disseminating through the populace. Bloody in his disposition, ardent in his cruel exhortations ; he was the delight of the murderous mob, because in so many points coinciding with themselves. By these leaders chiefly, assisted by many others of the Mountain members, the Parisian rabble was directed. The Gironde party saw the character of these demagogues, but in their eager efforts to subdue the constitutionalists, and overthrow kingly power, had co-operated with the Mountain ; intending, and for a considerable time appearing, to use them as tools. The insurrection of the 10th of August was the work of the Girondists for the subversion of monarchy : Danton was a most powerful auxiliary in the massacres of that bloody day. So effectually instrumental to the execution of the Girondist designs, the mob, and the leaders of the Mountain, more sensibly felt their own irresistible power. The Gironde party were totally unrestrained by conscience from seeking their ends through means however wicked ; yet they do not appear to have had a desire of shedding blood merely for pleasure. Blood they would not spare where they conceived it to answer their purpose ; the butchery of their fellow-creatures, however, they did not seek as a *pas-*

* See Adolphus's Memoirs. Life of Marat.

time. Not so the sansculottes, who manifestly sought massacre for its own sake *. Before the beginning of September the power of the Mountain was very greatly increased. Marat and his associates, under Danton and Robespierre, were the ringleaders in the September carnage. Brissot had formed the plan of a national convention, and a republic : the leaders of the Mountain were contriving that the republic, which they had been instrumental in creating should be directed by themselves, and that the national convention should contain a majority of their creatures. When the assembly which he had projected met, Brissot found that the Mountain was becoming very strong. The executive council, however, still consisted of Girondists, and, the army being commanded by officers of that party, they remained formidable. The Gironde party, desirous of establishing democracy, appeared to have had no intention of attacking the life of their sovereign, unless they conceived it to interfere with the preservation of the republic and their own power. From the German retreat, and the subsequent success of the French arms, they entertained no apprehensions of the restoration of monarchy, and wished to save the king's life : the opposite party, not merely murderers from policy, but sanguinary from the infuriate disposition of the multitude, desired the blood of Louis. The jacobin clubs, now leagued with the Mountain, promoted the savage barbarity. Their leaders, es-

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The Girondists wish to spare the life of the king.

The Mountain and the mob desire his massacre.

* What but the mere delight in human carnage could have prompted the greater part of the September massacres? See details in Playfair's Jacobinism.

CHAPTER

L.

1792.

Puſillanimi-
ty of Briſſot
and the
other Gi-
rondists.

A decree is
paſſed for
bringing the
king to trial.

ſpecially Robeſpierre, had formed views of the moſt unbounded ambition, and conceived that, by involving the people in the guilt of regicide, they would bind them entirely to their ſyſtem, and overpower their adverſaries the Gironde and all other parties. The Girondists, ſuperior as they were in genius and literature to the Mountain, were leſs daring and intrepid, and beſides, had more to dread, as their adverſaries were ſupported by the governing mob*. There were, however, ſtill great numbers throughout the provinces, and even in Paris itſelf, who ardently deſired to ſpare the blood of their king. By firmneſs and magnanimity, the Girondists, poſſeſſing the executorial functions, might have rallied round the metropolis a ſufficient force for ſaving innocent blood; but they did not diſplay the courage of reſolute determination, without which lawleſs ambition will not retain newly uſurped power. The proceedings were puſillanimous half meaſures, more contemptible in their inefficacy than the diabolical conduct of their adverſaries; and though leſs deteſtable in their operation, equally noxious in the reſult. The Mountain perſuaded the populace that Louis had betrayed his country, and conſpired againſt France with its enemies: on theſe grounds they inſtigated the mob to demand his trial†. After various preliminary diſcuſſions, the Girondists being afraid to expreſs their ſentiments, a decree was paſſed for bringing to trial a perſonage whoſe life, by every principle of expediency and policy, ought to have been ſacred under any well-regulated conſtitution; and whoſe perſon was inviolable according to the polity exiſting in France at the

* Segur vol. iii. page 6.

† Ibid, page 7.

time when the acts charged were alleged to have been committed. To prevent the public mind from hearing innocence calling for justice, they suffered not the king to know that his life was sought. From the fidelity of a zealous domestic * Louis of France first learned that a perjured banditti prepared publicly to destroy their monarch's life, which every federate Frenchman had sworn to protect. To break down the soul of their sovereign by accumulated misery, they debarred him from the sight and converse of his wife and children. They hoped that the strength of his benevolent affections, thus deprived of their dearest objects, would crush the faculties of his mind, and would disable him from vindicating his innocence, and exposing the enormity of their blood-thirsty guilt; but their purpose was frustrated. The dreadful situation in which their wickedness had placed him, roused the energies of a mind which manifested itself not unworthy of the descendant of Henry. With every circumstance of degradation that the upstart insolence of unmerited power could bestow, he was brought to the bar, and his charges were read. They consisted of two general heads; first, of crimes committed before his acceptance of the constitution; secondly, of crimes committed after his acceptance of the constitution. The evidence was composed of interrogatories put to the accused himself, and of documents charged to have been written with his privacy and concurrence. The charges before his acceptance of the constitution he successively an-

Attempts to break the spirit of Louis.

Trial.

* See Clery.

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1793.

Not the
slightest
proof of
guilt.

swered, by declaring what every hearer well knew, that the power then vested in him authorized the several acts, and consequently could now be no subject of question: the accusations for conduct subsequent to the acceptance he either shewed to be agreeable to his constitutional powers, or denied to be such as were represented. In every particular case he protested he had acted according to the best of his judgment for the good of his subjects. The allegation of conspiracy with the enemies of his country he firmly denied. The written evidence on which he was accused contained neither proof nor grounds for probable presumption that he was culpable, much less guilty: the assertions rested upon no evidence *. When the charge for the prosecution was finished, the king applied for permission to be allowed counsel. Various emigrants †, informed of the charges, proffered exculpatory testimony: Louis's judges would hear no evidence but on one side: the accusation was totally unsupported by proof. His defence was conducted, first by himself, with great magnanimity and ability, and afterwards by his counsel. It was glaringly manifest, that his accusers had totally failed in making out their case; that there was not a shadow of foundation to justify an arraignment, much less evidence

* For the proof of this assertion we refer to the reports of the trial.

† Lally Tollendal, Bertrand, Narbon, Caza'cs, and Bouillé, offered, at the risk of their lives, to go to Paris, and bear testimony to the falsity of the principal charges against the king, wherein they respectively were said to have been agents. Otridge's Annual Register, 1793.

to authorize a penal sentence, even against the meanest subject. Before judgment was passed, it was proposed to appeal to the people. The national convention, it was said, was not a tribunal of judges, but an assembly of lawgivers; and in assuming a judicial power they were usurpers. The people, their constituents, had not delegated to the national convention the power of trying causes. This objection, though unanswerably valid, had no weight with men determined to commit murder: for the appeal there were two hundred and eighty-three, against it four hundred and twenty-four. It being resolved by such a majority that the king should suffer punishment, it was strenuously contended by one party that he should be confined, by the other that he should be put to death. In a meeting of seven hundred the bloody verdict was passed by a majority of five! The iniquitous sentence being delivered after midnight, on the 20th of January, it was that day, at two o'clock, announced to the king, that the following day he was to be executed. With unmoved countenance hearing the decree read, he requested permission to see his family. The hardened hearts of his murderers did not refuse him this last boon *. He himself first conveyed to his queen, sister, and children, the agonizing intelligence. During the dismal interview, retaining his firmness, he inculcated on his son the transient nature of sublunary grandeur; called to his mind what his father had been, and then was; bid him trust for happiness to that virtue and religion which no human

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Condemnation and sentence.

Self-possession and magnanimity of the persecuted monarch.

Last interview of Louis with his family.

* Clery's Journal, 235.

efforts

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efforts could efface. Late in the evening his family left him, trusting * to see him the next morning once more. Prepared by conscious innocence, uprightness, and piety, for meeting death, neither guilt nor fear disturbed his rest. He slept soundly † till five o'clock, the hour at which he ordered his faithful valet to awaken him for the last time ‡. His family he now resolved to forbear again pressing to his arms. The bitterness of death the tranquil resignation of the christian regarded with complacency; the bitterness of parting grief the brother, father, and husband could not endure. He sought from religion, in his last hours, that consolation which, in the zenith of power, splendor, and magnificence, as well as in humiliation and captivity, she had never failed to afford. The attendance of a clergyman, a favour refused him ever since his imprisonment in the Temple by his atheistical oppressors, was, at his earnest intreaty, granted him on the day of his massacre. Being now assisted in the external rites, as well as encouraged in the internal sentiments of devotion, and having opened his soul to a priest whose sanctity he revered; he, for a short interval, returned to the concerns of this world; delivered to his faithful servant his last charges and commissions || to be conveyed to

* Clery's Journal, 239. † Ibid. 242. ‡ Ibid.

|| At seven o'clock (says Clery), the king, coming out of his closet, called to me, and taking me within the recess of the window, said, "You will give this seal to my son, this ring to the queen, and assure her that it is with pain I part with it: this little packet contains the hair of all my family; you will give her that too. Tell the queen, my dear children, and my
father,

to his family and friends. The messengers of murder arrived; and he was conducted from the Temple. When he was ascending the scaffold his executioners seized his hands in order to tie them behind his back: as he was not prepared for this last insult, he appeared disposed to repel it, and his countenance already beamed with indignation. Mr. Edgeworth, his clerical attendant, sensible that resistance would be vain, and might expose the royal sufferer to outrages more violent, intreated his sovereign to submit*. He presented his hands to the ministers of blood: they tied them with so much force as to call forth another remonstrance. He now mounted the scaffold amidst the noise of drums: bound and disfigured as he was, he advanced with a firm step, and requesting the drums to cease, was obeyed. He then, with a steady voice and in a distinct tone, addressed the people to the following purport. "Frenchmen, I die innocent of all the crimes which have been imputed to me; and I forgive my enemies. I implore God, from the bottom of my heart, to pardon them, and not take vengeance on the French nation for the blood about to be shed." As he was proceeding, the inhuman San-

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sister, that although I promised to see them this morning, I have resolved to spare them the pangs of so cruel a separation: Tell them how much it costs me to go without receiving their embraces once more!" Clery 249.

* The words of the priest were, "Sire, 'this added humiliation is another circumstance in which your majesty's sufferings resemble those of that Saviour who will soon be your recompence.

terre,

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terre *, who presided at the execution, ordered the drums to beat, and the executioners to perform their office. The king's voice was drowned in the noise of drums, and the clamours of the soldiery. As the fatal guillotine descended on his head, the confessor exclaimed, "Son of St. Louis, ascend into heaven!" The bleeding head was exhibited to the populace, some of whom shouted, *Vive la république!* but the majority appeared to be struck dumb with horror, while the affection of many led them to bathe their handkerchiefs in his blood. That every barbarous insult might be offered to the remains of the murdered prince, the body was conveyed in a cart to the church-yard of St. Madelaine, and thrown into a grave, which was instantly filled with quick-lime, and a guard placed over it till the corpse was consumed.

The execution of Louis XVI. violated every principle of justice, and every rule of law, which affords security to men bound together in society. By the established constitution, and which subsisted during all the time that he had any power to act, his person was inviolable †. By the law of the land he was amenable to no criminal court: the most tyrannical of all decrees only, a law passed after the alleged guilt could subject him to penal enquiry, whatever might have been his crime. But if his person had not been by law inviolable, the assembly which presumed to try him was not a competent court. The national convention, even though admitted to

* Annual Register, 1793.

† Chap. xlvii.

be the delegates of the people fairly chosen, were not delegates beyond the extent of their commissions: they were chosen by the people as their legislative representatives only. In exercising a judicial power, they were not a lawful tribunal, but a banditti of usurpers *. If the national convention had been a competent court, the charges adduced were principally irrelevant; some of the acts alleged referred to a period in which the constitution had been different, and in which Louis had simply exercised the powers which were then vested in the king: his former conduct they had sanctioned by conferring on him the supreme executive authority by the new constitution. Most of the accusations against him subsequent to his acceptance were constitutional exertions of his prerogative. The charges of corresponding with emigrants and foreign powers for the purpose of overturning the liberties of France, were supported by no authentic evidence. Thus, a personage criminally responsible to no French tribunal, was tried by a set of men that were not a legal court, for charges not criminal by the law of the land, if proved; or charges which, if criminal, were not proved. Condemned and executed in those circumstances, he presented to France an awful monument of the ferocious disposition by which it was now governed. The massacre of Louis demonstrated that liberty, law, and justice, were vanished; and exhibited the prevalence of a system which terror only could maintain.

Complicated iniquity of the process in principle, substance, and mode.

An awful monument of the doctrines and sentiments that governed France.

* This argument was very forcibly and eloquently employed by the constitutionalists and Girondists against the murderous Mountain: See speeches of the convention *passim*.

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Chauvelin
demands
from Bri-
tain the
recognition
of the
French
republic,
and the
admission
of its am-
bassador.
The British
government
refuses.

Chauvelin
remon-
strates
against the
alien bill.

While the French government was preparing this dreadful catastrophe, it instructed its agent at London to demand the virtual recognition of its establishment and authority, in the acceptance of an accredited ambassador. His Britannic majesty, considering the present rulers as only one party, and from the rapid vicissitudes of sway, a temporary and short-lived party, in conformity to his principles of neutrality, would not receive an ambassador, because such admission would have acknowledged as the rulers of France a particular junto; and violated his resolution and promise not to interfere in the internal affairs of France. But though he would not recognize the paramount faction of the day, as the firmly established and permanent rulers of France, yet while these powers did exist, and menaced England with hostility, he did not forbear to repeat his statements of the injuries which he had received, and the satisfaction he demanded; and since that continued to be refused, to prepare the means of enforcing redress. Chauvelin, by the instructions of the executive council, still persisted to refuse satisfaction for their aggressions, demanding the recognition of the republic, and the acceptance of an ambassador. He farther remonstrated against the alien bill, and the naval and military preparations, imputed hostile intentions to England, and notified that if the preparations continued, France would prepare for war. In conformity to the principles and objects of the decree of the 19th of November, he intimated an intention to appeal to the people of England against the government. His
Britannic

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On the
massacre of
the king he
is ordered
to leave
Britain.

Britannic majesty, persevering in his former conduct, declared he would continue his preparations until France should relinquish her ambitious aggression*. On the 24th of January 1793, intelligence arrived in London of the melancholy catastrophe of Louis XVI. His majesty immediately directed a notification to be sent to Mr. Chauvelin, that the character with which he had been invested at the British court, and of which the functions had been so long suspended, being now entirely terminated by the fatal death of his most Christian majesty, he had no longer any public character here. The king, after such an event, could permit his residence here no longer: within eight days he must quit the kingdom, but every attention should be paid him that was due to the character of the ambassador of his most Christian majesty, which he had exercised at this court. A negotiation was still open on the frontiers of Holland, between Lord Aukland and General Dumouriez, but the French persisted in refusing to relinquish their invasion of our allies, and in demanding the recognition of the republic; which requisitions being totally inadmissible, matters were not accommodated. The French rulers, finding Britain inflexibly determined on adherence to the rights of independent nations, by a decree of the convention, declared war against Great Britain with acclamations, and soon after against Holland, which their

France
declares
war against
Britain and
Holland.

* See series of correspondence between Mr. Chauvelin and Lord Grenville. Debrett's state papers of 27th December 1792, to 27th January 1793, both inclusive.

C H A P. L. forces were ready to invade. Britain and Holland, in their own defence, returned a declaration of hostilities ; and thus commenced the war between Great Britain and the French republic.

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France the aggressor.

The hostile advances of France, and the refused satisfaction for an aggression totally inconsistent with the law of nations, and existing treaties upon rights which we were bound to protect, combined with their attempts to excite insurrection in our own country, and followed by their declaration of war, render it evident that the French were the aggressors, and that Britain had a just RIGHT to go to war. The EXPEDIENCY of that measure, however, is a different question, and perhaps few subjects have occurred in political history, which have produced stronger arguments on both sides ; in which men of the most patriotic hearts, and wisest heads, drew more opposite conclusions, according to the light in which they viewed this immense and complicated subject. Never was there a question in which candour, founded on cool and comprehensive reflection, examining the mass of evidence and reasoning on both sides, would more readily allow laudable and meritorious motives to total diversity of opinion and conduct. Yet never did there occur a contest in which party zeal generated more illiberal constructions, and more malignant interpretation of intentions.

Opinions and sentiments of different parties.

The sentiments of Britons on the subject of the French revolution, may be divided into two classes ; those who wished the establishment in England of a system resembling the French republic, to the utter subversion of the British constitution ; and those who,

who, varying in their plans and measures, desired the preservation of the British constitution. Most of the British democrats and jacobins were inimical to a war with France, because it interrupted the communication by which they expected to establish their favourite system; but some of them were said to have rejoiced at the hostilities, because they conceived war would excite such discontent as would lead to a revolution. But far was opposition to the war from being confined to democrats, jacobins, and the enemies of our polity. Of those who disapproved of hostilities, many, in the general tenor of their conduct, evinced themselves the firm friends of constitutional liberty, and monarchy. They fought the same ends, the preservation of the British constitution, and the maintenance of British security, but deemed them attainable by peace instead of war. The friends of the British constitution, both without and within parliament, for and against the war, in a great measure took the tone of opinions advanced and maintained by three of the highest parliamentary characters; Edmund Burke, Charles James Fox, and William Pitt. Burke continued to deem the French revolutionists, of every opinion, kind, and succession, the determined and inveterate enemies of religion, virtue, civilization, manners, rank, order, property, throughout the world; and eagerly and resolutely bent on disseminating disorder, vice, and misery; to regard them as pursuing these ends, not only in the ardent violence of infuriate passion, but also in the principled and systematic constancy of depraved, but energetic and powerful reason. He reckoned them totally incor-

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Views of
Messrs.
Burke, Fox,
and Pitt
respectively
on the
French
revolution,
and the
war with
France.

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Messrs.
Burke and
Pitt support
the war on
different
grounds.

rigible by any internal means ; and therefore strenuously inculcated an external force to overwhelm an assemblage of beings, who, in his estimation, unless conquered, would destroy and devastate mankind. Long before* the commencement of hostilities between France and Germany, he had suggested a confederation of the European powers for the subjugation of men whom he thought revolutionary monsters ; and had uniformly written and spoken to the same purport. He eagerly promoted war, not merely for the purpose of procuring satisfaction for a specific aggression, which, in both plain and figurative language, he described as comparatively insignificant, but for the restoration in France of the hierarchy, aristocracy, and monarchy, the downfall of which, was, he thought, the cause of French ambition and encroachment, menacing the destruction of all Europe. Mr. Burke desired war with the French revolutionists, to overthrow the new system, and to crush the new principles. Mr. Fox continuing to impute the increasing outrages of the new votaries of liberty to glowing enthusiasm, still conceived that the enthusiasm would subside if left to its own operation. External force, he predicted, would not only preserve, but increase the vehement heat, which might otherwise cool. The recent experience of the effects of the German invasion, confirmed him in this opinion. He thought that an attempt to force the establishment of monarchy, would drive France to become a military democracy : the project was unwise, because it was

* See his posthumous works, memorial written in autumn, 1791.

impracticable

impracticable in its object, as well as pernicious in its means. Criminal, Mr. Fox said, as the French republicans were in their various confiscations and massacres; and in the murder of their king, their acts were no crimes against England; if the French nation choose to abolish existing orders, and to annihilate monarchy, they were not invading the rights of England; such a purpose of going to war was totally unjust; our efforts would spill the blood of our brave countrymen, would overwhelm us with additional debts; we might wage war year after year against France, as against America; we should make no progress, we should in the end be obliged to conclude a peace, recognizing the form of government which should then be established in France. The aggressions alleged against the French were too inconsiderable to justify war as a prudent measure, and if these were the sole causes of contest, they might be easily compromised, were Britain in earnest. We ought to receive an ambassador from the ruling powers of France, because they were the ruling powers *. With all foreign nations we considered neither the history of the establishment, nor the justice of the tenure, but the simple fact that the government with which we treated was established; such also was the conduct of other nations respecting England; France, Spain, and other monarchies, negotiated with Cromwell; England ought now to pursue the same course: we ought to treat with those who possessed the power of doing what we wanted, as for the same reasons we frequently negotiated with Algiers, Turkey, and Mo-

* See speeches of Mr. Fox on war with France, in January and February 1793. Parliamentary Debates.

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rocco, however much we reprobated their respective governments. Mr. Pitt was far from coinciding* with Mr. Burke, in proposing to carry on a war for the restoration of the monarchical government. France had manifested schemes of unbounded aggrandizement, actually invaded our allies, and declared her resolution to encourage revolt in other countries. By the reciprocal action and reaction of her principles and power, she sought the unlimited extension of both. Attacking us in such a disposition, and with such views, she compelled us to go to war for the repression of principles, and the reduction of power endangering our security. We ought not to recognize a government consisting merely of a faction, and not having the marks of probable stability, in the cool and deliberate approbation of the people. From a party so uncertain and changeable, we did not choose to receive a regular ambassador, as if it were firmly fixed in the supreme power; but we did treat with the existing government. The source of war was not our refusal to treat, as many believed, or pretended to believe, but the refusal of the French leaders to make satisfaction for injuries and insults. Not the restoration of monarchy in France, but the security of Britain, being our reason for going to war, we should carry on hostilities no longer than

* See Mr. Burke's two memorials, written respectively in November 1792, and October 1793, published in his posthumous works; and also his regicide peace, wherein he severely censures the objects of the allies, and the little confidence they reposed in the emigrants.

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The objects
Both of the
ministerial
party and
opposition
in parlia-
ment con-
stitutional,
though
sought
under
different
impressions,
and by
different
means.

we were in danger from the conduct and dispositions of France. As the republicans and democrats in opposing the war, coincided with Messrs. Fox, Erskine, Sheridan, and other able men who were inimical to hostilities, on patriotic and constitutional grounds, many of the other party classed them, and more affected to class them, with democrats and jacobins. As on the other hand, the votaries of war were presumed, by its opponents, to seek the re-establishment of despotism in France, they were called crusaders against liberty. On the one side party zeal represented Messrs. Burke and Pitt, and their respective adherents, as the abettors of tyranny; on the other, Mr. Fox and his adherents as the abettors of jacobinism and anarchy. Impartial history, viewing the individual acts and chain of conduct of these three illustrious men, finds no grounds to justify so injurious an opinion; but the strongest reasons for concluding that they and their supporters and adherents, through different means, sought the same end, the constitutional welfare of their country.

Many as were averse to war, both on the constitutional grounds of Mr. Fox, and on the unconstitutional grounds of democrats and jacobins, that great engine of politics in a free country, public opinion, was on the whole favourable to hostilities. A sense of the actual aggression of the French republic; but much more the alarming apprehension of French principles, rendered the country desirous of a total interruption of communication with France. It was not the war of the court, of the ministers,

Public
opinion
favourable
to war with
France.

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L.

1793.
In declaring
war against
France, the
king spoke
the voice of
the nation.

ministers, of the privileged orders; it was a WAR
OF THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF
BRITAIN. IN DECLARING WAR AGAINST FRANCE
IN FEBRUARY 1793, HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY
SPOKE THE VOICE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

CHAP. LI.

Objects of Britain—the repression of French principles, and the prevention of French aggrandizement.—Sir John Scott the attorney general introduces a bill for preventing traitorous correspondence—arguments for and against—modified, passes into a law.—Motion for peace.—Reasonings of Mr. Fox respecting the war and its probable effects.—The propositions are negatived by unprecedented majorities.—Mr. Sheridan proposes an enquiry into the alleged sedition.—His motion rejected.—Motion for parliamentary reform by Mr. Grey—arguments for.—Mr. Whitbread.—Arguments against.—Proposition reprobated as peculiarly unseasonable at such a period—and rejected.—State of commercial credit, and causes of its being affected.—Mr. Pitt proposes an advance of public money on the security of mercantile commodities.—The proposition is adopted, and revives mercantile credit.—East India company's charter on the eve of expiration.—Mr. Dundas presents a masterly view of the prosperity of India under the present system.—He proposes the renewal of the charter.—His plan is passed into a law.—Measures adopted to render British India farther productive.—Plan of agricultural improvement.—Sir John Sinclair—enquiries of in Scotland and England.—Result that agriculture is not understood and practiced in proportion to the capability of the country—proposes the establishment of a board of agriculture—the proposal adopted.—Lord Rawdon's motion respecting debtors.—Increase of the army and navy.—National supplies.—A loan.—Taxes.—Session closes.—Commencement of campaign 1793.—French invade Holland—reduce Breda.—Hundart and Gertruydenburgh surrender.—Dumouriez besieges Williamstadt and Maefstreight.—The British forces arrive in Holland.—The French raise the siege of Williamstadt.—Attacked by the Austrians at Winden

Windesheim—defeated.—*French generals accuse each other.*—*Dumouriez evacuates the Netherlands*—disapproved by the convention—privately proposes to make peace with the allies and restore monarchy—suspected by the French government—summoned to return to Paris to answer for his conduct—founds the dispositions of the army—finding them unfavourable, deserts to the Austrians.

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LI.

1793.
Objects of
Great Britain—
the representation of
French principles and
the prevention of
French aggrandizement.

THE grand purposes of the British government in its conduct respecting France were to repress the operation of revolutionary principles in this country, and to prevent the French system of aggression and aggrandizement from being longer carried into successful execution on the continent. In this two-fold object originated the measures of external policy adopted by parliament during the remainder of the session, and also some of those that were confined to internal regulation.

Sir John
Scott, the
attorney-
general,
introduces a
bill for
preventing
traitorous
correspondence.

War having been declared against a foreign country, it was obviously expedient to prevent correspondence between British subjects and the hostile party. To render this prohibition effectual, Sir John Scott, attorney-general, on the 15th of March introduced a bill for preventing, during the war, all traitorous correspondence with the king's enemies. The law of treason was founded upon a statute of the 25th of Edward III. which had been the subject of legislative exposition in different laws, enacted since that period. The acts declared treasonable in that statute were principally reducible to two heads *; to compass, that is, to intend or project the king's death; to levy war against the king, and

* See vol. iii. 232.

to abet or assist his enemies. Since that period, during wars, parliament had repeatedly passed laws which applied the general principle to the existing case; by specifically prohibiting adherence or assistance to nations at enmity with our sovereign *. Agreeably to the original statute, and the consequent explanatory acts the present bill was framed. Former laws had, in such circumstances, prohibited British subjects from sending military stores, arms, ammunition, and provision, of various enumerated kinds. The present bill, besides interdicting these articles, prohibited purchases of French funds or French lands. The reason of this prohibition was, that, as the French government proposed to carry on war against this country by the sale of lands, British subjects, if allowed to purchase such land would not only feel an interest in the property which they had thus acquired, but furnish the enemy with the means of carrying on war against ourselves. It was further proposed that no persons should be allowed to go from this country into France, without a licence under his majesty's great seal; and that their neglect of this clause should be deemed a misdemeanour; and that no persons, though subjects of this country, coming from France, should be allowed to enter this kingdom without a passport or

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Argument
for and
against.

* An act had passed in the reign of Queen Anne, to prevent all traitorous correspondence, which prohibited any person from supplying the enemies with arms, naval or military stores, or from going out of the kingdom to the enemy's country without licence. A similar act of William and Mary had carried the regulation farther; it prohibited goods and merchandizes of every sort. See Statutes at large.

licence,

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licence, or giving to a magistrate such security as he should require. The last regulation was to prevent the insurance of vessels which should traffic with France.

The bill was opposed as inconsistent with the treason laws of Edward III. the principles of the British constitution, with justice and commercial policy. The provision against Englishmen returning to the country, was the bestowal of a power on the king to banish, during the war, every British subject now in France. Though he might return, in certain cases, by giving security, who were to be the judges of the amount of that security? This was to be left to a magistrate : here one man was to be put under the discretion of another, who might render his return impossible, by exacting security to an amount that could not be given *. The restriction upon the purchase of lands was represented as extremely impolitic : it was alleged to be founded upon an absurd supposition, that Britons having here the most permanent security for their money, would send their capital to France, where they could have no security. Frenchmen, on the other hand, found property exposed to the revolutionary grasp in their own country ; and, to escape spoliation, had sent many and large sums of money to Britain to be vested in our funds, and also great quantities of other precious moveables : as proscription advanced they must wish to send more to the place of safety. If the present regulation were adopted, France

* See speeches of Messrs. Erskine and Fox. Parliamentary Debates, 1793.

would

would no doubt follow the example: we should render her government the most essential service, by forcing Frenchmen to employ their money in their own funds. Instead, therefore, of preventing, as proposed, the efflux of money to the country of our enemies, we would prevent its influx into our own; and by the project of withholding resources from the enemy, we should add to his strength. The bill was defended as conformable both to the general law, and to special acts passed in periods of war. The particular provisions most strongly combatted were supported as necessary in the precise and specific nature of the present war; the circumstances in which it was founded, and the projected resources of the enemy. After many debates, the two clauses most severely reprobated, concerning the return of British subjects, and the purchase of property in France, were abandoned. Undergoing these important changes, and several much less material modifications, the proposed bill was passed into a law.

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Modified, it
passes into a
law.

Repeated motions were made in the houses of parliament in order to procure peace. Of these the most important was a proposition of Mr. Fox, after the first successes of the allies, and the retreat of the French armies from the Netherlands*. Intelligence having arrived, that the French, leaving the scenes of recent invasion and aggression, had retired within their ancient frontiers; Mr. Fox, professing to con-

Motions for
peace.

* The historical narrative of these events is somewhat subsequent: I here only mention a result on which Mr. Fox founded part of his reasoning.

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Reasonings
of Mr. Fox
on the in-
expediency of
the war, and
predicting
its effects.

Under the avowed objects of the war as now attained, proposed an enquiry into the reason of its continuance; and moved an address to his majesty praying him to make peace. Supposing, for the sake of argument, the present a just, prudent, and necessary war at the beginning, he contended that the alleged reasons no longer existed. Holland, our ally, was not now exposed to any attack: France would willingly purchase peace by insuring the continuance of that safety, whereas he was afraid perseverance in carrying on war along with the combined powers, would again expose her to danger. The French had, no doubt, manifested designs of aggrandizement, but these had arisen from the successful repulsion of confederate attack. Besides, must England go to war with every continental power that perpetrates injustice? Was not the conduct of the partitioners of Poland equal in infamy and iniquity to the aggressions of France? Were the people of England to suffer all the miseries of war because the people of France were unjust, when that injustice, be it ever so atrocious, was violating no right of Englishmen? They had, indeed threatened the security of his majesty's allies; but now confined within their own territories, they were occupied in defending their frontiers against the combined powers. The danger apprehended from their former conquest was no longer a subject of just uneasiness and alarm. The French were, at present, in great internal confusion and distress; and Britain could form no views of aggrandizement from the situation of her adversary. Even were justice and humanity out of the question, would policy

licy and prudence authorize this country to seize the possessions of France? What advantage could we derive from promoting the conquering and encroaching plans of other powers? Having driven France from the territories of her neighbours, for what purpose were we to persevere in a war, unless to invade her dominions? If we did make an inroad into her territories, could such a movement be to attain our professed objects, security and defence? By continuing the war we should manifest an intention of either dismembering her empire, or interfering with the government which her people chose to establish. These objects our government had uniformly disavowed, and the declared ends of hostilities had been compassed. The most favourable season for offering peace was in the midst of success; when the enemy were sufficiently humbled to feel the evils of war, without being driven, by the haughtiness of the conquerors, to desperate efforts, which might turn the tide of victory. Those, who calculated probable exertions of men fighting for conceived liberty and independence by the usual course of military events, fundamentally erred in expecting similar effects from totally dissimilar causes. Inspired by such animating motives, men had, in all ages and countries, displayed valour, prowess, and policy, astonishing to the rest of mankind. Pressed by continued and invading war, which excited such motives, the ardent spirit and inventive genius of the French would, Mr. Fox predicted, no less exert themselves; WE SHOULD DRIVE THEM TO BECOME A MILITARY REPUBLIC. Let us therefore endeavour, while opportunity

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was favourable, to procure an honourable and secure peace. To this a common objection is, with whom shall we treat? The answer is obvious: with any men who possess the power of doing what we want: the French are desirous of peace, and the present rulers are as competent to conclude peace as to carry on war. Shall we beat peace with none whose form of government we shall not have previously approved? We have formerly made peace with tyrants; not because we approved their maxims and constitution of government, but because they had the power of making and observing conventions. Peace with any ruler or rulers implies approbation of their character no more than of their government. The French republicans have been guilty of cruelty and atrocious murders; so was Louis XIV. No British statesman refused to treat with the bigotted banisher of his most valuable subjects, nor with the sanguinary devastator of unoffending provinces. The statesman treats not with the virtue * but with the power of another party; and in expecting performance, looks for his best security, not in the integrity but the interest of the contractor. These were the arguments by which Mr. Fox inculcated the restoration of peace; and this was the strain of reasoning which he and other votaries of amity employed repeatedly at various stages of the contest†.

Messrs. Pitt
and Burke
oppose Mr.
Fox on
different
grounds.

In opposing the address, Messrs. Burke and Pitt argued conformably to the different views which they had respectively adopted concerning the French

* Parliamentary Debates, 17th June, 1793.

† See also his Letter to the electors of Westminster.

revolution

revolution and the war. Mr. Pitt persevered in urging the impracticability of any treaty with the persons that at present exercised the government of France; and in supporting his position, exhibited a very eloquent view of their individual and collective atrocities: therefore he would ~~not~~ treat with them *now*. Reprobating the French principles as manifested in their present operation, he still disavowed every design of forcible interference in the internal government of France: he sought only security. This security was to be effected in one of three modes: first, by obtaining an assurance that the principles should no longer predominate; secondly, that those who were now engaged in them should be taught that they were impracticable, and convinced of their own want of power to carry them into execution; or, thirdly, that the issue of the present war should be such as, by weakening their power of attack, should strengthen our power of resistance. Without these we might indeed have an armed truce, a temporary suspension of hostilities, but no permanent peace; no solid security to guard us against the repetition of injury and the renewal of attack. The present situation of affairs not being such, in Mr. Pitt's estimation, as to admit these means of obtaining security, he and his votaries opposed the address for the discontinuance of the war. Mr. Burke clearly and expressly combatted the principle asserted by Mr. Fox, that England had no right to interfere with the internal government of France. If (he said) by the subversion of all law and religion, a nation adopts a malignant spirit to produce anarchy and mischief in other countries, it is the right of all nations to go

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to war with the authors of such attempts. In support of this doctrine he quoted the authority of Vattel, who lays down a position, "that if any nation adopt principles maleficent to all government and order, such a nation is to be opposed from principles of common safety." This was the spirit of France; and what was to keep the effects of it from England? War, and nothing else: therefore war with the French republic, *on account of her system and principles*, Mr. Burke recommended; and explicitly declared his opinion, that while the existing system continued, peace with France was totally inadmissible. The proposed address to the king was negatived by a majority equally great as that which had voted for the war; and throughout the nation perseverance in hostilities was as generally popular.

The propositions are negatived by unprecedented majorities.

Ministers, and many others who had been formerly inimical to their measures, having expressed their conviction that there existed in the country dispositions and designs to subvert the constitution, and to follow the example of the French innovators, Mr. Sheridan proposed that an enquiry should be instituted into the alleged sedition. He declared his disbelief of the ministerial representations upon any evidence that had been adduced, but avowed himself open to proofs, if such should be established: he therefore proposed a committee of the whole house to investigate the assertions, that it might be ascertained whether there was really a plot against the country, or if it was merely a false and mischievous report to impose on the credulity of the nation; to attach obloquy to the opponents of administration,

Mr. Sheridan proposes an enquiry into the alleged sedition;

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administration, and to facilitate the continuance of the war. In answer to Mr. Sheridan's requisition it was argued, that government had not asserted the existence of plots to be established by proof for judicial animadversion, but of a seditious spirit and operations, which required deliberative precaution and the most vigilant care to prevent them from maturing into plots and insurrections. From a combination of various and disconnected circumstances a man might receive a moral certainty of a general fact which ought to regulate his conduct, though he might have no proof of such a fact * sufficient to establish it before a magistrate. The active circulation of seditious writings, the proceedings and declarations of the innovating societies †; the public and avowed sentiments ‡ of great numbers in favour of the French system as a model for this country, concurred in manifesting the existence of a spirit which it became the legislature and government to repress; and Mr. Sheridan's motion was negatived by a very numerous majority.

his motion
is rejected.

Great and powerful as the body was which now supported administration in both houses, the small band which in parliament abetted contrary measures was not discouraged from persevering in an opposition which appeared very unlikely to attain any of their objects in parliament; and out of parliament

* Mr. Windham's speech on Mr. Sheridan's motion, 4th March 1793. See Parliamentary Debates.

† Ib. see ib.

‡ Speech of Sir James Sanderson the Lord Mayor. See ib.

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Motion by
Mr. Grey
for parlia-
mentary
reform.

Arguments
for.

was not gratified by that popularity which has so often encouraged and elevated parliamentary minorities. Mr. Grey, agreeably to the intimation which he had given the preceding year in the house, and to the promise which he had made to the friends of the people, proceeded in his resolution to move a reform in parliament. Various petitions were presented to the house from inhabitants of towns, villages, and districts, both in England and Scotland, who joined for that purpose. Of these, some were moderate and respectful, but others wild and violent. One petition, of a very great length, was read from persons calling themselves *friends of the people* * : this representation, repeating the usual arguments, endeavoured to illustrate them by facts and instances†; and earnestly, though temperately, urged a change. Mr. Grey, having presented this petition, seconded its prayer by a proposition of parliamentary reform. Besides the usual arguments which, on a subject discussed so often in parliament, must necessarily be

* Not the association of which Mr. Grey was at the head, but a society that appears to have sprung from the addresses of that body.

† A work was published about this time, presenting an abstract of counties and boroughs, especially the latter, asserted to be in the nomination of peers, commoners, and the treasury, and not of the ostensible electors. The alleged result was, that seventy-one peers nominate eighty-eight, influence seventy-five; that the treasury nominate two, influence five; that ninety-one commoners nominate eighty-two, influence fifty-seven; that in England and Wales the whole number of members returned by private patronage amounted to three hundred and nine. See *Report on the state of the representation, published by the society of friends of the people.*

repetitions,

repetitions, and personal animadversions on the affirmed change of Mr. Pitt's conduct, Mr. Grey endeavoured to obviate objections to the seasonableness of the requisition. Forcibly urging the vast mass of influence which, though before known as a general fact, had never been so explicitly demonstrated by particular enumeration, he contended that the greater part of the influence in question was under the controul of ministers; that thence they had been enabled, at different periods of history, to establish systems and execute measures which were totally inconsistent with the country's good. Whatever evils did or might threaten our country, there was no preventive so certain, no safe-guard so powerful, as a pure and uncorrupted house of commons, emanating fairly and freely from the people. The national debt, in its present accumulation, was owing to the corruption of parliament: had a reform in the representation of the people taken place at the conclusion of the peace of 1763, this country would, in all likelihood, have escaped the American war: if it had been accomplished last year, probably it would have saved us from our present distresses. If ever there was danger to be apprehended by this country from the propagation of French principles, the danger was now completely at an end. No set of Britons, without being bereft of their senses, could after recent events propose the French revolution as a model for British imitation. But were such principles ever to threaten danger, the surest way of preventing it from being serious was, by promoting the comfort and happiness of the people*, to gratify their reasonable

* Mr. Grey's speech on reform, 6th May 1793. See Parliamentary Debates.

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Mr. Whit-
bread.

wishes, and to grant a parliamentary reform, which was so essentially necessary, and so ardently desired : the effectual preventive of violent and forcible alteration was timely reform. This last position was still more warmly urged by Mr. Whitbread. Metaphysical opinions (he said) have never, in any instance, produced a revolution : the engine with which Providence has thought fit to compass those mighty events has been of a different description : the feelings of the governed, rendered desperate by the grinding oppression of their governors. What brought about that great event the reformation ? Not the theories or speculations of philosophers, but the impolitic avarice and injustice of the church of Rome. What produced the catastrophe of Charles the first ? What produced the revolution in this country ? The oppressions of the executive government ; and to the same cause America owes her freedom. Lastly, what produced the revolution in France ? The misery of the people ; the pride, injustice, avarice, and cruelty of the court *. The great characters who acted in these different scenes had but little power in producing their occasions. Luther, Cromwell, or Washington, the illustrious persons who appeared at the æra of the English revolution, or the wild visionaries of France could never have persuaded the people to rise, if they had been unassisted by their own miseries and the usurpations of power. When the feelings of men are roused by injury, then they attempt innovation ; then the doc-

* Mr. Whitbread's Speech on reform. See Parliamentary Debates.

trines of enthusiasts find ready access to their minds: This general reasoning was not controverted by the opposers of parliamentary change in the present circumstances. No one pretended to assert that seasonable reform was not better than perseverance in profligate corruption and tyrannical oppression; but the existence of these mischiefs was denied: no evil had been demonstrated that called for such a corrective. The persons associated to petition for a reform in parliament (their opponents said), after a year's consideration, and, as it appears, repeated meetings, do not produce any specific plan whatever; it is therefore reasonable to infer, that they have not been able to ascertain the evil, much less to produce a remedy. The supporters of reform have asserted that the national debt originated in the corruption of parliament; and that a reform would have prevented the many burdensome wars in which this country has been engaged since the revolution. Instead of theory examine fact: all these wars have been agreeable to the people; the proposers and supporters of them spoke in unison with the sentiments of the people. Was not a great majority of the nation favourable to the wars of William and Anne, for humbling the pride and reducing the power of Louis XIV.? Was not the Spanish war of 1739 popular?—undertaken at the express requisition of the people, and even contrary to the known opinion of the government? Consider the war of 1756: was that unpopular? Never was any country engaged in a war more universally popular. The American war was equally approved by public opinion until within a year and a half of

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Arguments
against.

its

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The proposition is reprobated as peculiarly unseasonable at such a period,

and is rejected.

State of commercial credit, and causes of its being affected.

its conclusion: nothing could be more marked than the approbation which the public gave of that measure. No new system of representation could have spoken the voice of the people more plainly and strongly than the house of commons expressed it in approving these wars. That there might be improper influence in elections could not be denied; such influence, however, arose not from the political constitution, but from the imperfections, prejudices, and passions of human nature. If you are to reform, begin with moral reform * : but if political reform be wanted, this certainly is not the time to agitate subjects so likely to inflame the passions of the people, and to excite a public ferment. Though there may be some defects, abide by the constitution rather than hazard a change with all the dreadful train of consequences with which we have seen it attended in a neighbouring kingdom. These arguments made a deep impression, and the proposition of Mr. Grey was rejected by a very great majority, as totally inadmissible in the present state of affairs, opinions, and sentiments.

One of the most important objects of parliamentary consideration during the present session was the state of mercantile credit. A spirit of commercial speculation and enterprize had been for some years increasing in every part of the kingdom, and was now risen to such an height, as to threaten public credit with very serious danger. The circulating specie being by no means sufficient to answer the very greatly augmented demands of trade, the

* The reasoning in the text is in substance taken from the speech of Mr. Jenkinson. See Parliamentary Debates, May 6th, 1793.

quantity of paper currency which was brought into circulation as a supplying medium, was so large and disproportionate, that a scarcity of cash was produced which threatened a general stagnation in the commercial world. In consequence of the distress and alarm which this stagnation had caused, Mr. Pitt proposed that a select committee should be appointed to enquire into facts, and explore their causes; and the subject being investigated, it was found that the embarrassments arose from the precipitation, and not the inability of British merchants. The multiplication of paper currency, and scarcity of coin, induced banks and bankers to suspend the usual discounts in expectation of which, merchants had formed engagements that were far from exceeding their property, but in the present state of pecuniary negotiation, surpassed their convertible effects. To extricate commercial men from these difficulties, Mr. Pitt proposed that government should advance money on the security of mercantile commodities, by issuing exchequer bills, to be granted to merchants, on the requisite security, for a limited time, and bearing legal interest. Opposition expressed their apprehensions that the proposed mode would be ineffectual, that the failures arose from the present ruinous war, and that every remedy but peace would be futile. The projected plan, besides, would open a path to the most dangerous patronage, since government could afford or withhold the accommodation according to the political conduct of the applicant. These objections being over-ruled, the bill was passed into a law: the temporary embarrassment was removed; and manufactures and trade again became flourishing.

Mr. Pitt proposes an advance of public money on the security of mercantile commodities.

The proposition is adopted, and revives mercantile credit.

Another

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East India
Company's
charter on
the eve of
expiration.Mr. Dundas
presents a
masterly
view of the
prosperous
state of In-
dia under
the present
system.

Another subject, of the highest commercial magnitude, at the same time occupied legislature. The charter of the East India Company being on the eve of expiration, a petition for its renewal was presented to parliament; and on the 23d of April the subject was taken into consideration. The very general reception of Smith's commercial philosophy, especially his doctrine of free trade, and the known admiration in which Mr. Pitt, and many of his coadjutors and votaries held the popular system of political economy, had given rise to expectations and apprehensions that the exclusive privileges of the East India merchants would last no longer than the period which was pledged by the public faith. Many supposed that the commercial monopoly would be forever destroyed, and that the trade to India would be opened to the whole energy of British enterprise. To scrutinize this subject was the peculiar department of Mr. Dundas; and though thoroughly acquainted with the views of theoretical economists, that able minister regarded the question as a practical statesman. Without undertaking to controvert the doctrines of speculative writers concerning the productive efficacy of a free trade, or even denying the probability of its profitable effects, if extended to our intercourse with India, he laid down a sound and prudent proposition, that legislators ought not rashly to relinquish a positive good in possession for a probable good in anticipation. The advantages which experience had proved to accrue from the present system were immense, varied, and momentous. The shipping employed by the East India Company amounted to 31,000 tons; the seamen navigating those ships were about seven thousand

land men, who had constant employment : the raw materials imported from India, for the use of the home manufactures, amounted annually to about £700,000. British commodities annually exported to India and China, in the company's ships exceeded a million and a half sterling, including the exports in private trade which were allowed to individuals. The fortunes of individuals annually remitted from India amounted to a million. "The industry of Britain thus, (said Mr. Dundas) on the one hand is increased by the export of produce and manufactures; and the consumption of those manufactures enlarged by the number of persons returning with fortunes from India, or who are supported by the trade and revenues of India; and on the other, it is fostered and encouraged by the import of the raw materials from India, upon which many of our most valuable manufactures depend. So that, on the whole, the trade adds between six and seven millions to the circulation of the country. Such is the benefit accruing from the monopoly of the company, exercised under the controul of the legislature. The experience of nine years has justified this system! British India is in a state of prosperity which it never knew under the most wise and politic of its ancient sovereigns. The British possessions, compared to those of the neighbouring states in the peninsula, are like a cultivated garden contrasted with the field of the sluggard*. The revenues of India have been increased, and the trade connected with them is in a state of progressive improvement. A necessary war has been conducted with vigour, and brought to an honourable and advantageous conclusion. A system so effectually

* See Parliamentary debates, April 23d, 1793.

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He proposes
the renewal
of the char-
ter.

conducive to all its important purposes; the prosperity of Britain, the welfare of India, its internal good government, and security from foreign aggressors, ought still to be supported. The benefits to be derived from a free trade may be still greater; but they must be contingent, whereas the present are certain. Before a change can be digested and executed many great difficulties are to be surmounted. Would it not create an interruption in the discharge or liquidation of the company's debts? Would it not derange the regular progress of their increasing commerce? and would there not be a serious danger, that while these innovations were proceeding, rival European powers might seize the occasion, renew their commercial efforts, and divert into a new channel those streams of commerce which render London the emporium of the Eastern trade? On these principles, illustrated through a vast variety of important detail, he moved that the company's monopoly should be continued, under the present limits, for twenty years. He farther proposed regulations tending to promote a free trade, which should not interfere with the company's charter, and should embrace only such articles as did not employ the capital and enterprize of the East India Company, that should bring this surplus commerce into the ports of London instead of the continent of Europe, to which it had been chiefly diverted *. The most important measure which he proposed for this purpose was, that the company should annually provide

* See Sir George Dallas's letter to Sir William Pulteney, in which the origin, history, and nature of this free trade is very ably explained; and the means of making it to centre in British ports is clearly demonstrated.

three thousand tons of shipping for conveying to and from India such exports and imports as it did not suit themselves to include in their own commercial adventures, that thus British sailors might be employed in this private trade instead of foreign sailors; and British subjects might be enriched by this employment of British capital instead of aliens. After considerable discussion, the plan of Mr. Dundas was digested into a law; the charter was renewed, and the clauses respecting the promotion of free trade inserted into the act.

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This plan is passed into a law.

Measures adopted to render India farther productive.

Plan of agricultural improvement.

While commercial arrangements so much occupied the attention of our statesmen and lawgivers, a kindred subject was submitted to their consideration. Agriculture has never occupied a share of legislative attention proportioned to its momentous value as a branch of political economy, since Britain became so eminent for manufactures and commerce. This is an omission the consequences of which have been often fatally experienced from recurring scarcity in a country, by the fertility of its soil and the talents of its people, so adapted for securing plenty. An evil so frequent was naturally the subject of reiterated complaint; but no effectual measures were employed to prevent it from often occurring again. Among the many ardent enquirers into political economy, one of the most active and indefatigable whom an age supremely addicted to such studies has produced, is Sir John Sinclair. This gentleman, of a vigorous and acute understanding, enriched with knowledge and methodized by erudition, had bestowed great industry of research on various branches of political philosophy. He had traced, investigated, and presented to the public, the history of revenue. In the progress of his pursuits, agriculture

Sir John Sinclair.

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Enquiries of
in Scotland,and Eng-
land.Result, that
agriculture
is not un-
derstood and
practised in
proportion
to the capa-
bility of the
country—proposes the
establish-
ment of a
board of
agriculture.

agriculture presented itself to him as an object most deserving of promotion. He saw that very much remained to be done ; but before he could set about propositions of improvement, he thought it wisest and most expedient to ascertain the facts ; and therefore sought information where useful information was most likely to be found. In Scotland, his native country, he applied himself to the clergy, the best informed of any class of men of fixed rural * residence, and addressed certain queries to the members of that numerous and respectable body. These queries, embracing the physical, moral, religious, and political situation of the respective parishes, in the result of the answers produced an immense body of statistical knowledge ; especially on pastoral and agricultural subjects. He afterwards, less systematically and extensively executed, through different means, a similar plan in England. He advanced, however, so far as to ascertain a general fact, of the very highest importance ; that though in some particular districts improved methods of cultivating the soil are practised, yet, in the greater part of these kingdoms, the principles of agriculture are not yet sufficiently understood ; nor are the implements of husbandry, or the stock of the farmer, brought to that perfection of which they are capable. To promote so desirable a purpose, Sir John Sinclair projected the establishment of a board of agriculture, to be composed of gentlemen perfectly acquainted

* From the towns also the reports were extremely valuable ; but these were not all executed by clergymen. The most important—the account of the city of Edinburgh, came from the pen of Mr. Creech ; and with the state of the metropolis, very happily united the progress and variation of national manners.

with

with the subject, and considerably interested in the success of the scheme, and who should act without any reward or emolument. An address was proposed to the king, praying him to take into his royal consideration the advantages that might accrue from such an institution. His majesty directing the establishment of the board; the commons voted the necessary sums for defraying the expences, and the board of agriculture was accordingly established *.

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The proposal
is adopted.

Certain districts of Scotland, on the coast, were molested with heavier duties upon coals than other parts of the country. This evil had been often and strongly stated in the statistical reports; and the duty actually amounted to a prohibition. In the North of Scotland, from the high price of coals, the people were obliged to trust almost entirely to their peat mosses for a supply of fuel. In preparing this article a large portion of the labour of that part of the country was expended, which might be beneficially employed in fisheries and manufactures, and by this means a great part was lost to the revenue, which would have arisen from the industry of the inhabitants. For these reasons Mr. Dundas proposed the repeal of the duties in question; and that the revenue might not suffer, he moved certain imposts upon distilled spirits, which, enhancing the price of the article, would benefit health and preserve morals. A petition was presented by the cities of London and Westminster, praying for a repeal of a duty upon coals: in the reign of queen Anne a tax of three shillings per chaldron had been imposed upon imported coals, and the amount was to be

* See Otridge's Annual Register, 1793, chap. iv.

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Law for the
relief of
Scottish ca-
tholics.Motion of
Lord Raw-
don for the
relief of
debtors and
satisfaction
of creditors.

applied to the building of fifty-two churches *. The duty afterwards had been employed in the maintenance of the clergymen of those churches; and lastly, was made a part of the consolidated fund; and ministers alleging it was no longer a local tax, prevailed on the house to reject the petition. Among the classes of subjects who applied for relief this season were the catholics of Scotland: the Lord Advocate stated on their behalf, that his majesty's catholic subjects in Scotland were at present incapacitated by law either from holding or transmitting landed property, and were liable to other very severe restrictions, which could not now be justified by any necessity or expediency. He therefore proposed a bill to relieve persons professing the catholic religion from certain penalties and disabilities imposed on them by acts of parliament in Scotland, and particularly by an act of the 8th of King William: the bill being introduced, was, without opposition, passed into a law †.

Lord Rawdon this year presented a bill for the relief of insolvent debtors, and for amending and regulating the practice with regard to imprisonment for debt. The bill was a compound of that humanity and discrimination which has been already noticed in this benevolent and able character. His lordship deemed the law of imprisonment for debt to be founded in principles at once rigorous and absurd: it was rigorous, because it exacted from the

* This was a quite different impost from that of Charles II. of five shillings per chaldron, now enjoyed by the Duke of Richmond.

† Acts of parliament, 33 of Geo. III.

victims of its operation, while doomed to inaction, that which, in the free exercise of their faculties, they were not able to perform ; and was absurd, because ineffectual to its avowed purpose ; for it was calculated to defeat, not to attain, its object. If the debtor be guilty of a fraud, said his lordship, punish him as a fraudulent agent ; if not guilty of a fraud, do not punish insolvency as a crime, which should rather be commiserated as a misfortune : to punish insolvency as criminal, and to doom fraud to the same punishment as mere insolvency, is to confound all moral distinctions. As the law now stands between debtor and creditor, in the very commencement of an action the fundamental principle of justice is violated. What is the great object of the institution of government, but to prevent individuals from being even the judges, far more the avengers, of their own wrong ? Yet, by the existing laws of the land, the creditor is enabled to deprive the debtor of his liberty upon a simple swearing to the debt. The proposed bill, however, for the present, did not intend a general change of the law which he reprobated as so severe and unjust : what he now desired, was a modification of arrests and of bail, so as to prevent oppression and distress for inconsiderable sums. The bill was opposed by Lord Thurlow and by others, as striking at the whole system of the law of England ; and the Lord Chancellor proposed that it should be referred to the judges to examine the state of the debtor and creditor laws, to consider the subject, and prepare a bill to be introduced early the next session : Lord Rawdon agreeing, it was, for the present, withdrawn.

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Increase of
the army
and navy.
National
supplies.
Loan and
taxes.Session
closes.

These were the principal subjects that came before parliament this session, except the supplies. The army and navy were increased to a war establishment, and a considerable body of Hanoverian troops was employed in the service of Britain. Besides the ordinary national funds, a loan of four millions five hundred thousand pounds was required. The high estimation in which the minister stood with the monied capitalists induced the public to expect that the loan would have been negotiated on very favourable terms : but the stagnation of mercantile credit was felt by the minister as well as others who had occasion to borrow money. There was actually a great scarcity of cash, and the public was obliged to pay a premium of eight per cent. For defraying the interest of the loan the provisions were, ten per cent. on assessed taxes ; an additional duty upon British spirits, on bills, receipts, and on game licences. On the 21st of June the session was closed by a speech in which his majesty expressed the highest satisfaction with the firmness, wisdom, and public spirit, which had distinguished the houses during so very important a session, and testified his approbation of the successive measures which they had adopted for the internal repose and tranquillity of the kingdom ; for the protection and extension of our commercial interests both at home and in our foreign dependencies, and for their liberal contributions towards those exertions by which only we could attain the great objects of our pursuit, the restoration of peace on terms consistent with our permanent security, and the general tranquillity of Europe.

Europe. The signal successes with which the war had begun, and the measures that were concerted with other powers afforded the most favourable prospect of a happy termination to the important contest in which we were engaged *.

Having brought the parliamentary history of this session to a close, the narrative now proceeds to military transactions, some part of which passed at the same period; including certain events to which allusion has already been necessarily made.

From the disposition of their forces the French were enabled first to commence hostilities; and as soon as war was declared against Great Britain and the States General, Dumouriez proposed to invade the United Provinces. There the democratic party, which, as we have seen, the aristocratical faction had cherished and abetted to co-operate in their enmity to the house of Orange, still subsisted. Though cautious in their proceedings since the re-establishment of the stadtholder, they were increasing in number and force from the Belgian commotions, and still more from the French revolution; especially after the republicans had become masters of the Netherlands. With the disaffected Dutch Dumouriez maintained a close correspondence, carried on chiefly by emigrant Hollanders assembled at Antwerp: these, formed into a kind of Batavian committee, were the channels of communication between the Gallic leaders and the malcontents residing within the united provinces. The malcontents recommended eruption into Zealand, but the general himself thought it more advisable to ad-

* State Papers, June 2:ft, 1793.

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The French
invade Hol-
land. •
Breda,
Klundert,
and Ger-
truyden-
burg surren-
der.

vance with a body of troops posted at Mordyck, and masking Breda and Gertruydenberg on the right, and Bergen-op-Zoom, Steenberg, Klundert, and Williamstadt, on the left, to effect a passage over an arm of the sea to Dort, and thus penetrate into the very heart of Holland *. The design was adventurous, but not unlikely to succeed, if executed with such rapidity as to anticipate the arrival of assistance from England. The army which Dumouriez commanded on this occasion consisted of twenty-one battalions, which, including cavalry and light troops, amounted to about thirteen thousand men. He was accompanied by the skilful engineer D'Arcon, who had invented the floating batteries at the siege of Gibraltar, and a considerable number of Dutch emigrants. A proclamation was published, inveighing against the English government and the conduct of the stadtholder, and calling upon the Dutch to assist their democratic brethren in destroying the power of their aristocratic tyrants†. On the 17th of February the French army entered the territories of the States General. Breda being invested surrendered by a capitulation, in which it was stipulated, that the garrison should retain their arms, and continue to fight for their country during the war. On the 26th Klundert opened its gates to the French army; and on the 4th of March, Gertruydenburg having stood a bombardment of three days, surrendered. The same terms were granted to these two fortresses as to Breda. The strength of the captured towns was so great, that military critics, convinced they might have

* Memoirs of Dumouriez.

† State Papers, February 1793.

resisted much more effectually, did not hesitate to conclude that their easy submission arose from treachery. Dumouriez now proceeded towards Williamstadt. While he was himself making such progress on the left, General Miranda, advancing on the right, invested Maestreicht with an army of twenty thousand men. Having completed his works, he summoned the garrison to surrender; but the Prince of Hesse, commander of the fortress, refused to capitulate, and avowed his determination to defend such an important post to the last extremity. The French general bombarded as well as cannonaded the town; while, on the other hand, the besieged made two sallies, though without material success. General Miranda continued his investment of Maestreicht; and a covering army of French was encamped at Herve under the command of General Valence. Meanwhile General Clairfait, with the Austrian army, having crossed the Roer, attacked the French posts on the 1st of March, and compelled the army to retreat as far as Alderhaven, with the loss of two thousand men, twelve pieces of cannon, thirteen ammunition waggons, and the military chest: the following day the archduke attacked several French batteries, and took nine pieces of cannon. On the 3d of March the Prince of Saxe Cobourg obtained a signal victory over the French*, and drove them from Aix la Chapelle even to the vicinity of Liege, with the loss of four thousand killed, one thousand six hundred prisoners, and twenty pieces of cannon. In consequence of this

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 Dumouriez
 besieges
 William-
 stadt and
 Maestreicht.

* New Annual Register 1793, p. 159.

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defeat of the covering army general Miranda raised the siege of Maestricht. Dumouriez, following the career of his successes in the west, laid siege to Williamstadt, and to Bergen-op-zoom*; but the course of his victory was arrested; for now he had a new enemy to encounter in the British army.

The British
forces arrive
in Holland.

The first object of the British military plans for this campaign was the defence of Holland, and a body of troops was in February sent, consisting of about six thousand British, commanded by the duke of York. A brigade of British guards was thrown into Williamstadt, who animating the Dutch to vigorous defence, and leading their efforts, made so gallant a resistance, that Dumouriez saw that perseverance would be unavailing; he therefore raised the siege, ordered his troops to retire from Bergen-op-zoom, evacuated the towns and forts which had surrendered, and returned to take the command in the eastern Netherlands, where the declining fortunes of the French required the presence of an able general. The Austrians had continued advancing to Brabant; and several skirmishes of posts had taken place, in which the Germans were generally superior. On the morning of the 18th of March, an engagement commenced at Neer Winden, on the confines of Brabant and Liege. General Dumouriez attacked the centre of the imperial army with great vigour, but suffered a repulse; and he yielded to the same superior efforts from the imperial right wing. In the afternoon, however, the French right wing gained some ad-

The French
raise the
siege of
William-
stadt.

They are
attacked by
the Austri-
ans at Neer-
winden,
and de-
feated.

* See Dumouriez's Memoirs.

vantage;

vantage; but the corps de reserve, commanded by general Clairfait, decided the day. The army of Dumouriez retreated for some time in good order, but were at length entirely routed by the Austrian cavalry. The slaughter was great; the French lost four thousand men, and soon after, six thousand deserted to the enemy. The French generals, by mutual crimination, endeavoured respectively to remove from themselves the blame of disaster. Dumouriez imputed the defeat to general Miranda, who, he asserted, both fought feebly, and fled unnecessarily. In his memoirs, indeed, he admits that general La Marche committed the first error, by an injudicious movement which threw his troops into confusion; but Miranda is the subject of his principal censure*. Miranda, on the other hand, imputes the discomfiture to treachery on the part of Dumouriez†. But wherever the blame lay, if there was any, the battle of Neer Winden decided the fate of the Belgian Netherlands. The Austrians continued to pursue the republicans; on the 21st, Dumouriez judged it proper to take post nearer Louvain, and on the following day he was attacked by the enemy. The action was bloody, and lasted the whole day; but the Imperialists were compelled to retreat with great loss; the Austrians, however, rapidly advancing in other quarters, the French general judged it expedient to evacuate all his conquests, and re-enter France. Dumouriez thoroughly knew the disposition of the convention; and foreseeing

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French
generals
accuse each
other.

Dumouriez
evacuates
the Nether-
lands.

* See Dumouriez's Memoirs.

† In a letter to Petion, dated 21st March 1793.

the

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1793.
He privately
proposes to
make peace
with the
allies, and
restore
monarchy.

He is sus-
pected by
the French
govern-
ment,
and sum-
moned to
return to
Paris, to
answer for
his conduct.

He sounds
the dispo-
sition of the
army;
but finding
them un-
favourable,
deserts to
the Austri-
ans.

the fate which the suspicious republicans prepared for a vanquished general, he resolved to make his peace with the allies, to march with his troops against Paris, there to effect a counter-revolution, and re-establish monarchy. On this subject he conversed with colonel Mack, an Austrian officer of great eminence; and it was agreed that the Imperial troops should act merely as auxiliaries for the attainment of this object; and should remain on the frontiers, unless he wanted their assistance. If Dumouriez should find it impracticable to effect a counter-revolution without the aid of the Austrians, then he should indicate the number and kind of troops of which he should stand in need to execute his design. The Austrian forces to be furnished in that event, should be entirely under the direction of Dumouriez. The executive government suspecting the dispositions of Dumouriez, sent deputies to investigate his conduct. Confident of the assistance of his army, he did not disguise from them his project to annihilate the national convention, and fix a king upon the throne. Informed of his design, the convention sent commissioners to supersede his command, and summoned him to appear at Paris to answer for his conduct. Dumouriez ordered these delegates to be seized, and conveyed to general Clairfait's head quarters, to be kept as hostages for the safety of the royal family. But the army soon shewed the vanity of Dumouriez's expectations; they not only refused to follow him to Paris, but gave him reason to doubt his personal security; and he was compelled to seek safety by flight. Having reached the imperial territories, he had an interview with

with colonel Mack, and with the prince of Saxe Cobourg. Two proclamations were digested, one by Dumouriez himself, the other by the prince of Saxe Cobourg. The manifesto of General Dumouriez contained a recapitulation of his services to the French republic; a statement of the cruel neglect which his army had experienced in the preceding winter, and of the outrages which were practised by the Jacobins towards the generals of the republic, and particularly himself. It states the reasons why he arrested the commissioners; exhibits a vivid picture of the evils which might be apprehended from the continuance of the anarchical system in France; and expresses his confident expectations, that as soon as the Imperialists entered the territory of France, not as vanquishers, and as wishing to dictate laws, but as generous allies, come to assist in re-establishing the constitution of 1790, great numbers of the French troops would join in promoting so necessary a purpose. He protested upon oath, that his sole design was to re-establish constitutional royalty; and that he and his companions would not lay down their arms until they had succeeded in their enterprize. These protestations, interspersed with a considerable portion of gasconading promises which he could not perform, and threats which he could not execute*, constituted the declaration.

A mani-

* In the last paragraph, in which he introduces his oath under the head "*I swear* (he says) that we will not lay down our arms until we shall have succeeded in our enterprize; and our sole design is to re-establish the constitution, and constitutional

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A manifesto * was also published by the prince of Saxe Cobourg, announcing that the allied powers were no longer to be considered as principals, but merely as auxiliaries in the war; that they had no other object but to co-operate with general Dumouriez, in giving to France her constitutional king, and the constitution she formed for herself. He pledged himself that he and his army would not enter the French territory to make conquests, but solely for the end now specified. He declared farther, that any strong places which should be put into his hands, should be considered as sacred deposits, to be delivered up as soon as the constitutional government should be established in France, or as soon as general Dumouriez should demand them to

tional royalty; that no resentment, no thirst after vengeance, no ambitious motive, sways our purposes; that no foreign power shall influence our opinions; that wherever anarchy shall cease at the appearance of our arms, and those of the combined armies, we will conduct ourselves as friends and brothers; that wherever we shall meet with resistance, we shall know to select the culpable and spare the peaceable inhabitants, the victims of the infamous wiles of the Jacobins of Paris, from whom have arisen the horrors and calamities of the war;—that we shall in no way dread the poignards of Marat and the Jacobins;—that we will destroy the manufacture of these poignards, as well as that of the scandalous writings by which an attempt is made to pervert the noble and generous character of the French nation;—and finally, in the name of my companions in arms, I repeat the oath, that we will live and die free. The general in chief of the French army, Dumouriez. See State Papers, 1793.

* See State Papers, April 5th, 1793.

be

be eeded. It was at this period that Mr. Fox * and many others thought that the combined powers might have proposed such terms of peace to France, as would have been accepted with equal readiness and gratitude. The allies, it was alleged by the votaries of peace, ought to have declared themselves to the national convention to the following purport. Arrange your internal government according to your own inclinations: the present confederacy is formed for purposes of defence, not of aggression; we shall not therefore interfere in the constitution of France. We only desire you to re-establish the ancient boundaries of the Netherlands, to restore your other conquests; to liberate the queen and the royal family; and to allow the emigrants a moiety of their property: we will then withdraw our forces, and be your friends. Had such propositions been made, these politicians affirmed that a stop might have been immediately put to the effusion of blood; and that France would at this time have been under a regular and established government, and Europe would have been at peace. It is difficult to say with any degree of probability, what would have been the result in a very problematical question, of an experiment that never was tried. The probable success of such an attempt proceeded upon an assumption that either the French were not originally the aggressors; or, if the beginners of the war, were from recent discomfiture tired of its

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Hypothetical reasonings on the practicability and expediency of peace at this period of victory to the confederates.

* It was in consequence of the present posture of affairs, that he made the motion for peace, which has been already mentioned in the parliamentary history.

continuance.

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continuance. Perhaps if the offer had been made, in their present circumstances they might have received it with delight; and for a time have continued pacific; but afterwards might have resumed invasion, when the confederation was broken. But it belongs not to history to state possible, or even probable consequences, which might flow from measures that were not adopted. If as some able statesmen argued, the hour of victory was the hour of offering peace, the confederates against France were of a totally different opinion. They conceived France to have been the aggressor; to have manifested views of ambitious aggrandizement; that it was the policy of her neighbours to prevent her encroachments, and in her present condition to reduce her strength so as effectually to prevent the future accomplishment of her projects; that therefore they ought now to press upon her in her weakened state. On this view they regulated their policy, and formed the plan of the rest of the campaign. A congress was held at Antwerp, wherein representatives attended from the several powers that formed the combination, which had now been joined by Spain and Naples. At this congress were present the prince of Saxe Cobourg, counts Metternich, Starenberg, and Mercy d'Argenteau, with the Prussian, Spanish, and Neapolitan envoys. It was determined that the fortresses on the frontiers of France should be invested by the armies of the confederates, that the enemy's coasts should be beset on every side by the fleets of the maritime powers, and that every encouragement and practicable assistance should be afforded to the

royalists

royalists within France*. A second proclamation was now published by the prince of Saxe Cobourg, annulling the first, and declaring a design of keeping whatever places he should capture, for the indemnification of his sovereign. Dumouriez, when he was informed of this change in the Imperial system of military operations, declared to the prince de Cobourg, that he could not with honour serve against France. Receiving a passport, he therefore retired into Germany †.

By the plan of operations concerted for attacking the frontiers of France, the British, Dutch, Austrian, and Prussian troops were to press on to the Netherlands; an army of Prussians and other Germans from the Rhine. Joined to the confederate armies were great bodies of emigrants, commanded by the princes of the blood, and other refugees of high rank and distinction. The chief part of the exiles was attached to the army of the Netherlands; and on all sides dispositions were made for invading the French dominions.

* New Annual Register, 1793.

† He first came over into Britain, but was desired by ministers to quit the kingdom; and in his visit nothing passed of any historical importance. See Annual Register, 1793.

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CHAP. LII.

Overtures of the French government for peace with Britain.—Le Brun the minister proposes to send an ambassador to England.—Letters containing his propositions are delivered to Lord Grenville—but receive no answer.—Alarming state of France—at war with all her neighbours.—Intestine war in La Vendee.—The victorious allies invade the French dominions.—Battle at St. Amand between the allies and the French.—The Duke of York and the British troops take a share in the action.—British soldiers supremely excellent in close fight—in spite of French numbers and artillery by the bayonet decide the fate of the day.—Battle of Famars and the defeat of the French.—Blockade and surrender of Conde.—Siege of Valenciennes—strength of the fortress—operations—taken after a siege of six weeks.—Successes on the Reine.—Mentz taken by the Prussian army.—France torn by dissensions.—Mountain excite a clamour against the Brissotines.—Establishment of the revolutionary tribunal.—Brissotines, with distinguished speculative ability, deficient in practical talents.—Mountain superior in decision and daring atrocity.—Brissot, Roland, and their supporters, seized and committed to prison.—Robespierre and his associates become rulers of France.—System of terror reigns.—Constitution of 1793.—Singular absurdity and anarchy.—Committees of public and general safety.—Combination in the South for overthrowing the frightful tyranny.—Toulon puts itself under the protection of Lord Hood and the British fleet.—Comprehensive and efficacious malignity of the governing junto.—Robespierre and his band abolish Christianity—publicly and nationally abjure the Supreme being—proscribe genius, destroy commerce, confiscate remaining property—debase every kind of excellence—attempt to level all civil, political, and moral distinctions.

distinctions.—The pressure of the war facilitates their atrocities.—Forced loans—requisitions.—Bold scheme of the war minister to raise the nation in mass.—Efficacy of this system—confounds all calculations of the allied powers—overcomes the insurgents of La Vendee—forces the British to seek safety by evacuating Toulon.—Netherlands.—Activity and progress of the Duke of York and the British troops.—Victory at Lincennes—invests Dunkirk with reasonable hopes of success.

ABOUT the time that Dumouriez engaged in a negotiation with Cobourg for the re-establishment of monarchy, the existing government of France made an attempt to procure the restoration of peace. The proposals were conveyed through a very unusual channel: Le Brun, the French minister, employed Mr. James Matthews, an Englishman of whom he had no knowledge but what Matthews gave himself, to carry to London two letters * addressed to Lord Grenville, and a third to Mr. John Salter, attorney, then a vestry clerk to the parish, since a notary public in Penny's Fields, Poplar, recommended by Matthews, requesting him to deliver the two letters to the British secretary. The purport of the first was, that the French republic desired to terminate all differences with Great Britain, and that he demanded a passport for a person to repair from France to Britain for that purpose. The second mentioned Mr. Maret as the person who was to be deputed, and claimed a safe conduct for him and his necessary attendants. Mr. Salter accepted the commission, as he had probably agreed with Matthews; and on the 26th of April 1793, delivered the two letters to Lord Grenville, at his office,

* Dated at Paris April 2d, 1793, and delivered to lord Grenville 26th April 1793. See State Papers.

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1793.
Overtures
for peace by
Le Brun
the French
minister.

He proposes
to send an
ambassador
to Britain.

Letters from
him are de-
livered to
Lord Gren-
ville,

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1793.
but receive
no answer.

Whitehall. The letters procured no attention, and produced no effect: they never, like other overtures for negotiation, were the subjects of parliamentary discussion; and the literary notice which they excited was inconsiderable. The partizans of war regarded the uncommonness of the agency as a sufficient reason for overlooking the propositions *. The votaries of peace did not view the advances in that light, but from their general and cursory account, appear to have thought the transaction of little importance †, and are totally unacquainted with the causes and circumstances of a mode of conveyance so different from the established etiquettes of diplomatic communication. The real history of this mission the kind information of Mr. David Williams has enabled me to lay before the reader.

Circum-
stances and
history of
these prof-
fers of con-
ciliation.

The literary celebrity of Mr. Williams, and the use which the French reformers had made of his "Letters on political liberty," induced the Girondists to invite him to France, that he might assist them in the formation of a constitution ‡. Brissot, whom he describes as an honest but a weak man, he had known in England, had corresponded with him, and warned him of the danger which he was incurring by his violence. Repairing to Paris, he be-

* See Otridge's Annual Register for 1793; a volume which, having evidently taken a side, I prize less as an authority than any of the other volumes of the same work, which loyally and patriotically supporting our constitution, record and estimate measures with the dignified impartiality of authentic history.

† See Belsham's history, vol. v. p. 47.

‡ See Madame Roland's Appeal, and Public Characters for 1798, page 472.

came intimate with Condorcet, Roland, and other political leaders of the times. He continued to admonish them of the evils which they would encounter, unless they could moderate the licentiousness of the populace, and suppress the faction of the jacobins. He saw the wildness and extravagance of the Girondists themselves, and strongly represented to Brissot the impracticability and madness of rousing and uniting the nation by war. He powerfully inculcated the necessity of peace and moderation, to the welfare of the people, and the security of any constitution which might be formed for that purpose : he particularly recommended the maintenance of peace with England, and strongly reprobated the prosecution and death of the king, as giving the populace a taste of blood. Eager as the Brissotines were for war, yet they were conscious that France was not prepared for hostilities with England : patriotic policy sometimes overcame revolutionary fury, and then they would listen to the pacific counsels of Mr. Williams. When the discussions between Mr. Chauvelin and Lord Greenvile were evidently tending to hostility, they asked Mr. Williams to undertake a mission to the British court, in order to effect an accommodation. Regarding such an office as not altogether suitable to a British subject, especially in the fluctuation of sentiment which the French government exhibited on the questions of peace and war, he declined the mission. Still, however, he conceived that peace might be preserved : the same opinion was expressed to him by members of the Girond; and it was with great surprize, on the 1st of February, that he heard the convention declare war by *acclamation* against Britain and Holland. Mr.

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Williams now resolved to return to his country : still Le Brun and other members of the French government professed to him their wishes for the restoration of peace ; and since he would not himself undertake a mission, that minister asked him to bear a letter to Lord Grenville, which requested the British government to open the ports of Dover and Calais ; in the postscript declared the French government to desire the re-establishment of peace, proposed to send a minister, and stated that Mr. Williams was empowered to explain their principle and project of conciliation, so as to be satisfactory to the British government. Mr. Williams returned to Britain, repaired to the secretary of state's office, delivered his letter*, and mentioned his readiness to wait on Lord Grenville whenever his lordship should appoint ; but he was never sent for by the secretary, and there his commission ended. Mr. Williams himself appears to me to think that the French were already convinced of their precipitation in declaring war, and would have willingly agreed to the terms which Lord Grenville had required from Chauvelin, if they found the British government equally disposed to return to amity ; but as no opportunity was afforded him of an audience from Lord Grenville, neither his statements nor deductions could be of any avail to the purpose of the commission with which he was charged.

Correspondence between Britain and France being now precluded, Le Brun heard nothing from Mr. Williams. While Mr. Williams had been at Paris, there went thither a Mr. James Matthews,

* See State Papers.

who professed great regard and veneration for Mr. Williams, was frequently in his company, and had thereby opportunities of knowing the names and persons of some members of the French government, but was not introduced to any of these rulers. The inauspicious commencement of the campaign between France and the allies disappointed the republicans; and the desertion of Dumouriez added treachery as a fresh ground of alarm to the apprehensions that were entertained from the British and Austrians. Perhaps these considerations rendered the French government more anxious for peace, or perhaps they might profess anxiety without being sincere: whatever was the motive, they certainly did repeat the attempt; and this Mr. Matthews was the person, on the mere pretence of being Mr. Williams's confidant, that was appointed to carry the second overtures to England. Why Mr. Le Brun chose Mr. Salter to be the deliverer of the dispatches sent by Mr. Matthews I have not learned, or why Mr. Matthews did not deliver them himself, he not being in a state of mind to answer such questions. Indeed, the whole transaction; Mr. Matthews's application to Le Brun as the confidant of Mr. Williams; the appointment of Mr. Salter, then vestry-clerk of the parish of Poplar, to convey the letters to Grenville; and the assurances of Matthews, who brought the letters, that he should instantly make peace, and provide for all his friends (in which, however, Mr. Williams was not mentioned), can be accounted for only from an incipient derangement of mind, the symptoms of which soon appeared, and for which he has been ever since

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confined. Mr. Matthews was chosen to be the bearer, not as an obscure and unconnected individual, but from being conceived by the French government to have the confidence of Mr. Williams. Mr. Williams they had first wished, in their extravagant manner, to be, in effect, an ambassador; and finding he would not accept that general mission, they prevailed on him to be the bearer of specific proposals, which they professed to think conducive to peace. Thence came Mr. Matthews to be employed in the SECOND application which the French government, within the first three months of the war, made for the re-establishment of peace. That the republicans were sincere in these proffers it would be very rash to affirm. Against their sincerity there were the series of Brissotine menaces of universal warfare; the tendency and character of the revolutionary enthusiasm: for their sincerity there were the actual disappointments which they were experiencing, and the farther disasters which they *then* appeared likely to suffer. Perhaps they might be sincere in desiring peace with Britain, in order to facilitate their schemes of ambition against other countries; but those schemes of ambition had been formed in the exultation of unexpected success, and might not be cherished at the season of discomfiture and retreat. From the correspondence between Grenville and Chauvelin, they well knew that no proposal would be admitted by Britain which did not renounce the navigation of the Scheldt, forbear interference with the internal affairs of other countries, and forego their projects of aggrandizement: if they intended to offer less, their overtures,

overtures, therefore, would have been futile ; but it cannot † be ascertained whether their offers would or would not have been satisfactory, according to our requisition of satisfaction, since they were not *heard*. The intervention of a vestry clerk has been stated as ridiculous ; but Le Brun did not propose Mr. Salter as a negociator, he employed him as a courier for carrying an offer of sending as ambassador Mr. Maret, who had a few months before conferred and negociated with Mr. Pitt.

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The situation of France was at this time extremely alarming ; she was at war with her three most powerful neighbours, Prussia, Austria, and Britain. A body of her bravest sons, stimulated by the strongest resentment, was joined to her formidable enemies. The states of Holland, and principalities of Germany, though not very important in their separate force, yet added to the impulse which was already so great. Sardinia, Naples, and Spain, were embarked in the same cause. From the Texel to the straits of Gibraltar, from Gibraltar to Shetland, there was a circle of enemies encompassing France*.

Alarming
state of
France ;

at war with
all her
neighbours.

Within

+ On this part of my enquiries Mr. W. declined any particular explanation. He is writing on the subject himself.

* The people, from having such a multiplicity of enemies, conceived themselves at war with the whole world : the following incident that occurred to a captain of the navy, a near relation of mine, is a curious illustration of these sentiments. On the 22d of March arrived at Portsmouth from Jamaica, the Falcon sloop of war, captain Bisset, having captured off Ushant a French privateer. Captain Bisset was not apprized of a war between this country and France, till he fell in with the above privateer, who bore down upon the Falcon, but perceiving her to be a sloop of war, she immediately hauled her wind, and

C c 4

fired

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Within her territories there were numerous bodies eagerly desirous of co-operating with her foes from without: a formidable rebellion was broken out in La Vendee, and the French government, divided into two violent factions, appeared on the eve of destruction by an intestine war. These concurring circumstances seemed to justify the hopes of the confederacy, that France, surrounded by so many enemies, and rent by such convulsions, would be unable to resist their separate and united efforts: but the French republicans were not overwhelmed by the multiplicity of dangers. The national convention, informed of the arrestation of their commissioners, and the defection of Dumouriez, manifested that rapid energy which ever distinguished the French revolutionists in emergency and danger, and adopted efficient measures to preserve the tranquillity of the metropolis, and defend the frontiers against the invading host. The northern army was re-organized, and general Dampierre being re-appointed provisional commander in chief, re-occupied the camp at Famars in French Hainault, near the right bank of the Scheldt. The confederate army was posted at Kieverain on the frontiers of Austrian Hainault,

fired her stern. Captain Bisset, astonished at this conduct, instantly stood after her, and coming up with her, demanded the reason of such conduct; when he was told by the commander of the privateer, "*that France had declared war against all the world.*" The Falcon then fired a few guns, and the French ship struck her colours, and was taken possession of by the Falcon.

with

with their right extending to St. Amand, and their left to Bavie, so as to blockade Conde, threaten Valenciennes, and even to overawe Maubeuge. The French general proposed to drive the allies from so advantageous a position, and to relieve Conde. On the 1st of May he began the execution of this design, by attempting to dislodge the Austrians from several villages which they possessed, but was repulsed with the loss of near a thousand killed and wounded. Dampierre undismayed by this check, and encouraged by reinforcements which were just arrived, marched on a second time, with three formidable columns against the Prussian lines at St. Amand, and maintained a long, severe, and bloody contest, till succours from the Austrians under Clairfait, obliged him to make a precipitate retreat, after leaving two thousand men on the field of battle. His immediate object being to relieve Conde, he still threatened the Prussians, who were now joined by the British troops under the duke of York. Intending to confine his attack to the right wing, he feigned an intention of assailing the whole line; and advancing to the wood of Vicoigne, he began the charge. On his left were constructed several strong batteries, where were posted ten thousand men drawn from the garrison of Lille. Against this numerous force the Coldstream guards, with some other British troops, were dispatched. This heroic band, regardless of numbers, checked the enemy's batteries with their field pieces; and after one discharge of musketry, rushed forward with fixed bayonets. Terrible in every species of warfare, British soldiers are irresistible in close fight;

when

British
 soldiers
 supremely
 excellent in
 close fight,

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in spite
of French
numbers
and artil-
lery, by the
bayonet de-
cide the
state of
the day.

when no dexterity can elude the force of personal prowess; and hence the opportunity of charging bayonets has rarely failed to assure victory to our countrymen. Our combatants made an impression on their antagonists, which the French soon saw they could not withstand man to man; they had, therefore, recourse to their chief excellence, missiles; with rapid activity they wheeled round artillery from the front to the flank, and opened with grape shot upon the gallant English. Dreadfully annoyed, the British forces disdained to fly: they kept their ground, repulsed the multitudes of the enemy, and in the conflict mortally wounded Dampierre*. The French had gone forth to battle in the most assured confidence, thinking they had only Prussian tactics and intrepidity to oppose their rapidly active genius and valour; but finding it was a very different undertaking to combat the energy of British heroism, they retreated within their lines, nor afterwards attempted offensive operations in a quarter secured by so formidable champions. From this period to the 23d of May, the French did not venture out of their lines; the allies, on the other hand, encouraged by the impression which was made by the action of the 8th, resolved to make a general attack on the camp at Famars, that covered the approaches to Valenciennes. The dispositions for this grand object being finished, the 23d of May was fixed for executing the design. At day break the British and Hanoverians assembled under the command of the duke of York, and the Austrians and German auxiliaries under the prince of Cobourg and general Clairfait. Great pains had been employed to conceal

* New Annual Register, 1793.

conceal the projected attack, until its execution should be commenced. A fog somewhat retarded the advance of the troops, but at the same time concealed their approaches; until the sun penetrating through the mist, displayed to the astonished French the allies in four columns, proceeding towards their camp. A tremendous fire of artillery began the action on both sides: the contest soon became closer; and one of the Austrian columns was nearly overpowered, when the Hanoverians and British repulsed its assailants: at length the combined troops, led by the British, and headed by the duke of York and general Abercrombie, entirely defeated the French army. During night the duke of York refreshed his forces, resolved to attack the enemy's fortifications the next morning; but in the night the republicans abandoned the entrenchments which they had formed with such pains and expence, and left the way open to Valenciennes. About the same time bodies of Dutch and Austrian troops employed in the maritime Netherlands, drove the French invaders on that side within their frontiers.

Battle of
Famara.

Condé, as we have seen, was in a state of blockade: the town was not provided with a sufficient quantity of provisions to sustain a long siege: the governor (General Chancel), therefore, about this period ordered the women and children to quit the place. As the diminution of consumers tended to prolong a blockade, the Prince of Wirtemberg, who commanded on that service, would not suffer their departure; opposed and prevented repeated attempts. The besieged, after a very brave and obstinate

Blockade
and sur-
render of
Condé.

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Siege of Valenciennes.

Strength of
the fortrefs.

Operations.

obstinate resistance, and enduring with the most persevering fortitude all the rigours of famine, were, on the 10th of July, obliged to surrender at discretion. But a much more arduous enterprize, undertaken by the allies, was the siege of Valenciennes; and the victory at Famars having enabled them to approach, they formed a regular investment. Valenciennes is situate on the left bank of the Scheldt, opposite to the camp which the French had recently occupied. Its fortifications, among the chief efforts of Vauban's genius, rendered it a post of extraordinary strength. The garrison consisted of about eleven thousand men: Custine, appointed on the death of Dampierre to take the command of the Northern army, found it impossible to relieve the fortrefs, which was therefore obliged to depend upon its own strength. The allies, conscious of their force, and confident of ultimate success, summoned the fortrefs to surrender: the summons was disregarded; and being repeated, was still unavailing: the allies, therefore, proceeded with their approaches. A difference of opinion prevailed between the two chief engineers of Britain and of the emperor respectively, Colonel Moncrief and Monsieur Ferasis. The British officer, less regarding customary modes than efficient means, proposed to plant batteries immediately under the walls of the city; instead of approaching it by regular parallels*. The German officer, adhering closely to experimental tactics, proposed to proceed in the manner which had been so long in use; and his opinion was adopted by the council of war. On the morning of the 14th of June the trenches were opened; and Farasis directed

* New Annual Register, 1793, page 187.

the siege under the superintending command of the Duke of York. The successive parallels were conducted with distinguished skill, and finished with uncommon expedition; this dispatch being powerfully promoted by the British guards; who, from their habits of working in the coal barges on the Thames, were enabled to do more work in a given time than an equal number of any other soldiers*. In the beginning of July the besiegers were able to bring two hundred pieces of heavy artillery to play without intermission on the town, and the greater part of it was reduced to ashes. The smallness of the garrison, compared with the extent of the fortifications to be defended, prevented General Fer- rand, the commander, from attempting frequent sorties: in one which the garrison made on the 5th of July, however, they were very successful, killed several of the enemy, and spiked some cannon. A considerable part of the war was carried on under ground, by numerous mines and counter-mines, which both besiegers and besieged constructed. The chief of these were, one which the besiegers formed under the glacis, and one under the horn-work of the fortress†. These mines were completed and charged on the 25th of July, and in the night, between nine and ten o'clock, were sprung with complete success. The English and Austrians immediately embraced the opportunity to throw themselves into the covered way, of which they made themselves masters. The Duke of York now, for the third time, summoned the

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* See Macfarlane, vol. iv. page 390.

† New Annual Register, 1793, page 190.

place

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Captured,
after a siege
of six weeks,
in the name
of the em-
peror.

Sentiments
of Burke
and his vo-
taries on
this subject,

place to surrender; and the governor seeing no hopes from farther defence, capitulated; by the capitulation the troops taken in the garrison were allowed to retire into France, on swearing that they would not during the war, serve against any of the allied powers; and the Duke of York took possession of Valenciennes in the name of the Emperor of Germany.

Those promoters of war with the French republicans who desired the restoration of monarchy as the chief object of hostilities, disapproved of various circumstances in the capture of Valenciennes, and indeed in the principle on which the campaign was conducted; as, according to their hypothesis, the legitimate object of the war in which the confederacy was engaged was the re-establishment of monarchy, the emigrant princes and other exiles ought to have had the chief direction in its councils and conduct; whereas these were really employed as mercenaries. On the same hypothesis Valenciennes and other towns captured, or to be captured, ought to be possessed in the name of Louis XVII. as king of France, and of his uncle the Count of Provence, as lawful regent during the young king's minority; and troops capitulating ought to be restricted from serving against French royalists, as well as the allied powers. These observations were fair and consistent inferences, if it had been admitted that the combined powers were actually, as the English opposition asserted, fighting for the restoration of the monarchical constitution*: but according to Bri-

* The most eloquent and illustrious advocate of this doctrine, Mr. Burke, exhibits this theory in his remarks on the policy of the allies, begun in October 1793.

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1793.
are different
from those
of Mr. Pitt
and his co-
adjutors.

tish ministers, and the greater number of their parliamentary votaries, the purpose of the war was not a counter-revolution in France, but the attainment of security against the French projects of aggrandizement, and dissemination of revolt; that the most effectual means for this purpose was the reduction of her power, without any regard to her internal government; that we were to reduce her strength in the present as in former wars, by capturing, according to our respective force, her towns and possessions. Indeed, the confederates at present seemed to proceed on the same principle of conquering warfare which had been practised by the grand alliance for humbling the power of Louis XIV. To adopt the language of works less specially devoted to the support of ministerial politics, than to the restoration of monarchy in France; they were rather *anti-gallicans*, warring against physical France, on the general principles of former times, than *anti-jacobins*, warring against moral France, on the peculiarly requisite principles of present times. On the one hand, the object of Mr. Burke, however impolitic and impracticable it may have been deemed, was much more definite than the objects of Mr. Pitt, as far as these were explained: on the other, the objects of Mr. Pitt being conceived to be merely anti-gallican, were much more agreeable to the prevailing sentiments of Britons than the avowal of a combination would have been, for interfering in the internal polity of France, and re-establishing a government which, in its former exercise, Britain so very much disapproved. The capture of French towns in the name of the young prince, as sovereign

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1793.

reign of a country that had renounced its authority, would have been an avowal of a counter-revolutionary project, which the British government disavowed, and which the majority of the British nation would have censured. The appropriation and capitulation of Valenciennes were therefore perfectly consonant to the professed views with which the allies, having completed the purposes of defence and recovery, had invaded the French Netherlands. While the allies were thus engaged in the Netherlands in strengthening the power of the emperor on the Rhine, they were occupied in recovering the captures of the French. On the 20th of June the Prussian army invested Mentz; and after a regular and vigorous siege, and a very gallant defence, it capitulated on the 22d of July.

Successes of
the Prus-
sians.
Mentz is
taken.

France is
torn by
dissensions.

While the confederates were making such advances on the frontiers of France, the republic was entirely torn with dissensions. The Girondists, who had been long declining in authority, and who were more than ever abhorred by the Mountain, since their desire to save the king, had constantly supported Dumouriez against the invectives of Marat and the jacobins. As soon as Dumouriez was driven into exile, the Mountain raised an outcry against his late protectors the Girondists. They were represented to the furious multitude as a band of traitors and counter-revolutionists. The municipality of Paris, and the jacobin clubs, resounded with complaints, threats, and imprecations, against the party in the convention which retained some sentiments of humanity, some love of order, and some regard for justice. The Girond party still possessed considerable

The Moun-
tain excite a
clamour
against the
Girondists.

considerable influence in the convention ; but the Mountain, gratifying the Parisian rabble with blood and plunder, exercised the supreme command in the city. In March was established the revolutionary tribunal for trying offences against the state. This celebrated and dreadful court, consisting of six judges, was wholly without appeal. The crimes on which it was to pronounce were vague, undefined, and undefinable ; extending not merely to actions, but to most secret thoughts. On the 1st of April a decree was passed abolishing the inviolability of members of the convention when accused of crimes against the state.

The chiefs of the Brissotines appeared to be astonished and confounded at these daring and desperate measures of their inveterate adversaries, confident in their power and popularity ; and made no vigorous opposition to decrees which were evidently intended to pave the way to their destruction *. It was now manifest that the Girondists were inferior to their antagonists in vigour and decision ; and, notwithstanding the intellectual and literary accomplishments of the leaders of the party, grossly deficient in practical talents for government ; that, therefore, they must finally sink under the contest of which they were unequal to the management. The Mountain had not only in its favour the jacobin club and the dregs of the people of Paris, but it knew that the triumphant party in that immense city, from terror or obedience, was able to command, throughout the whole extent of the republic ; and whilst

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1793.

Establishment of the revolutionary tribunal.

The Girondists possessed a speculative ingenuity, but wanted practical ability.

The Mountain superior in decision and daring atrocity.

* See Belsham's history, vol. 5. p. 68.

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LII.

1793.
The Girond leaders are committed to prison.

Robespierre and his associates become rulers of France. System of terror reigns

Constitution of 1793. Singular absurdity and anarchy

Committees of public and general safety.

the Girondists were reasoning, deliberating, and menacing, the Mountain conspired, struck, and reigned. On the 31st of May, early in the morning, the tocsin was sounded ; the barriers were shut ; Brissot, Roland, and many others of the most distinguished Girondists were seized and committed to prison by a force devoted to Robespierre. Terror quickly seized all minds ; and the theoretic republic of ingenious, but unwise and unprincipled innovators, became subject to a detestable and bloody tyranny. Robespierre, Danton, Marat, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud, and Couthon, became rulers of France. They associated with themselves ferocious individuals whose talents were necessary to the administration, and who consented to serve them through fear, ambition, or policy*. They hastily drew up the celebrated constitution of 1793 ; and no policy ever existed more absurd, or more favourable to anarchy. Legislation was confined to a single council, the members of which were elected without any qualification of property : the executive power was among twenty-four ministers, appointed by the convention, and dismissed at their pleasure. This government, the most absolute and the most ferocious of which there has ever been an example, was confined to two sections, consisting of twelve deputies. The one was called the *Committee of public safety*, and the other the *Committee of general safety*. They were to be renewed every month ; but by one of the incalculable effects of fear, which blinds those whom it governs, the convention, divesting itself of its inviola-

* See Segur's *History of Frederic William*, v. iii.

bility, entrusted the committees with the formidable right of imprisoning its members; and thus rendered the power of the government as solid as it was extensive. Meanwhile, some of the Girondist deputies who escaped the proscription excited insurrection. Several departinents indicated a disposition to avenge themselves, and resist oppression: some of them took up arms. By far the most formidable resistance to the reigning usurpers arose in the South, where the three principal cities, Lyons, Marseilles, and Toulon, formed a combination for overturning the existing tyranny. Toulon opened a negociation with Lord Hood, who commanded the British fleet in the Mediterranean. The English admiral, at the instance of the inhabitants, took possession of the town and shipping, in the name of Louis XVII. The Spaniards advanced into Languedoc, proffering assistance to all those Frenchmen who wished to resist the horrid tyranny of the jacobin faction.

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1793.

Combinations in the South for overthrowing the frightful tyranny. Toulon puts itself under the protection of Lord Hood and the British fleet.

In comprehensive tyranny, efficacious malignity, deliberative iniquity, affecting the persons, liberties, properties, and minds of their countrymen, the junto which now governed France surpassed all the wickedness ever recorded in history. Their predecessors had progressively promoted infidelity, confiscation, destruction of rank and order; but still there remained a considerable degree of religion, and great masses of property, with a small share of subordination. Robespierre and his band abolished christianity; publicly and nationally abjured the Supreme Being. They proscribed genius, lest its efforts might overthrow their horrible system. They ruined commerce to stimulate the multitude to

Comprehensive and efficacious malignity of the governing junto.

Robespierre and his band abolish Christianity and abjure the Supreme Being;

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attempt to
level all
civil, politi-
cal, and
moral dis-
tinctions.

plunder; and they seized all property. Totally free from every principle of religion and virtue; without humanity, pity, or remorse, they proscribed, they murdered, they plundered; they deemed all mankind merely instruments for gratifying their diabolical passions*. The means by which they were enabled to exercise such a complication of tyranny was the multitude. By the populace conjointly and aggregately they were able to exercise despotism over the populace themselves severally†. The war facilitated the extension of their power, because it enabled them to accuse all persons obnoxious to themselves as traitorous correspondents with foreign enemies. The war, also, so much engaged the anxious attention of the people, that they had less time to brood over the internal sufferings of their country. Pressed on all sides by invaders, who they conceived were desirous of dictating to them in the arrangement of their own government, an ardent zeal to maintain national independence drew off their thoughts from internal despotism. The same patriotic spirit was inflamed, not only by the fears of foreign interference in their government, but by the belief that the dismemberment of their country was intended.

The pressure
of the war
facilitates
their atrocities.

The pressure of the confederates, and their supposed designs, cherished the ferocious tyranny of Robespierre. Detestable as this relentless tyrant was, yet, in one momentous object, he promoted the first wish of Frenchmen; not to be controuled by foreign invaders. In opposing the confederacy of princes, the revolutionary government displayed

* See Otridge's Annual Register, 1793.

† See Burke on Regicide peace.

an energy that triumphed over all obstacles. Much of this energy, no doubt, is imputable to the very wickedness of the system. The understanding, employing its invention and foresight in seeking means for gratifying passions, without the least restraint from conscience, may certainly be more efficacious; than if repressed in its devices by religion and virtue. The extinction of every pious and moral sentiment, and the removal of the sanctions of a future state, prepared minds for every enormity. It paved the way for bearing down all opposition to the executive power proceeding by massacre or any other crime that might most expeditiously effect its purposes. The revolutionary government, in its total violation of justice, found ample resources for military supply. *The terrible system* wanted money : a forced loan placed the fortunes of all men at its disposal. It wanted provisions, ammunition, arms : it put all physical resources under REQUISITION *. It wanted men : its war minister, bold in conception as unrestrained by humanity and justice, said, "let us confound all the calculations of experienced warriors : ours is a new case ; raise the whole nation in MASSE : overpower discipline by multitude ; bear down tactical skill and experience ; and tire out their efforts by fresh and incessant relays : consume your enemies by the fatigue of exertion." Scarcely were the orders given when twelve hundred thousand men † marched out to meet the enemy. Of

Forced loan

Requisitions

Bold scheme of the war minister to raise the nation in mass.

* See decree of August 15th, 1793, requiring all Frenchmen to be in permanent readiness for the service of the armies with every kind of warlike stores, and even every material for making arms, powder, ball, and all other kinds of ammunition or provision for military service.

† See New Annual Register, 1793.

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LII.

1793.

Effect of
this system.
It over-
comes the
insurgents of
La Vendee.

Murderous
cruelties.

these, great numbers, no doubt, were propelled by fear, and the assured alternative of massacre if they refused ; but whatever might have been the motive, the effect was prodigious. To hasten the operation of such a multitude, ~~vehicles were contrived for~~ carrying both men and cannon with extraordinary dispatch against the enemy. Immense bodies were sent to quell the insurgents of La Vendee, and succeeded in repressing the attempts of these royalists. Marseilles yielded with little contest to the revolutionary arms. Lyons, instead of following the example of Marseilles, made a most resolute resistance, and for two months heroically withstood an active siege. General Kellerman, who commanded the army of the Alps, was ordered to besiege that city ; but not answering to the impatience of the convention, he was removed, and General Doppet appointed to succeed him ; to whom the inhabitants, who were not only unused to arms, but very ill provided with the means of defence, as well as the necessaries of life, on the 8th of October, were obliged to surrender. A great part of the city was reduced to ashes by a continual bombardment. The victors, who had sustained considerable loss during the siege, were filled with furious resentment, and gratified their revenge by the most savage and atrocious cruelty. The wretched victims, too numerous for the individual operation of the guillotine, were driven in large bodies, with the most brutal and blasphemous ceremonies, into the Rhone ; or hurried in crouds to the squares to be massacred by musketry and artillery *. Immense bodies of troops, under General

* See Ottridge's Annual Register for the year 1793, p. 275.

Cartaux, proceeded to Toulon : an advanced corps having arrived in the neighbourhood of that city, Captain Keith, Elphinstone, of the navy, landing from the fleet, and joining a body of English and Spanish infantry, attacked and routed the enemy with considerable loss. Soon after, General O'Hara, arriving from Gibraltar, took the command of the British forces. Attacking the enemy, he defeated and put them to flight ; but pursuing the fugitives very eagerly, he unexpectedly encountered a large force entirely fresh. In endeavouring to draw off his soldiers safely to Toulon he was unavoidably engaged in a conflict with superior numbers ; and after an obstinate contest he was wounded and taken prisoner. Near a thousand of the British and their allies were either killed or captured. As an immense mass of French was now approaching, against which to defend the town the remaining handful was totally incompetent, it was judged expedient to evacuate the place with all possible dispatch. Accordingly, the allies made dispositions for withdrawing, and saving as many of the inhabitants as could be removed ; and for destroying all the shipping, stores, and provisions, that could not be preserved by any other expedient from falling into the hands of the enemy. This service was performed very completely : the troops were carried off without the loss of a man ; and several thousands of the loyal inhabitants of Toulon were sheltered in the British ships. Sir Sidney Smith, to whose active intrepidity was entrusted the conflagration of the magazines, store-houses, and arsenals, with the ships in the harbour, most effectually performed this hazardous and extraordinary duty. On this occasion, fifteen ships of the line,

The French
force the
English to
evacuate
Toulon.

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LII.

1793.

with many frigates and smaller vessels, were destroyed, and an immense quantity of naval stores. Three ships of the line, and several frigates, accompanied the British fleet. By this destruction the French navy received a blow very difficult to be retrieved.

Nether-
lands.

While the French, rising in a mass, crushed revolt and expelled foreign enemies in the South, their gigantic efforts effected in the North a momentous change in the events of the campaign. After the reduction of Valenciennes, the French were compelled to abandon a very strong position which Custine occupied behind the Scheldt, denominated Cæsar's camp. A council of war was now held by the allies to consider the most effectual plans of pursuing their successes. Generals Cobourg and Clairfait proposed*, while the French were under an alarm from the disasters in the Netherlands, to penetrate towards Paris, while a force should be sent, under cover of the British fleets, to co-operate with the loyalists in Brittany: the Duke of York was of opinion that it would be much more advisable to extend their conquests upon the frontiers. He proposed that the army should divide; that he, at the head of his countrymen, the Dutch and Hanoverians should attack the enemy on the side of West Flanders, while the allies continued their operations in the Eastern Netherlands. It was concerted that the allies should besiege Quesnoy, and that the duke of York, marching to the coast where he could receive maritime co-operation, should invest Dunkirk. This port has ever been, in time of war, a very great

Progress of
the Duke
of York
and the
British
troops.

* Annual Register, 1793.

receptacle

receptacle for privateers, and extremely troublesome to the English trade in its approach to the Downs. Therefore the British cabinet, as well as the commander in chief, were eager to wrest from the enemy such means of annoyance. Separating from the allies, his highness marched towards Dunkirk; and on the 18th of August he reached Menin *. The Dutch under the hereditary prince of Orange, attacked a French post at Lincelles in that neighbourhood, and were repulsed; but the British troops, though very inferior in force, carried the post with fixed bayonets, and defeated the enemy. The French no longer venturing to obstruct his advances, on the 22d his highness arrived before Dunkirk. On the 24th he attacked the French out-posts, and compelled them to take refuge within the town †. In this engagement, however, he incurred some loss both of men and officers; and among the latter the Austrian general Dalton, so noted, as we have seen during the revolt of the Netherlands from the emperor Joseph. On the 28th of August the siege was regularly commenced by the duke of York, while general Freytag with an army of auxiliaries, was posted to cover the besiegers. A considerable naval armament from Great Britain, intended to co-operate with a military force, by some unaccountable delay did not arrive nearly so soon as was appointed and expected. His highness nevertheless carried on the siege with great vigour and skill. Meanwhile the republican troops, commanded by general Houchard, poured from all

CHAP.
LII.
1793.

Victory at
Lincelles.

His highness invests Dunkirk with reasonable hopes of success. Late arrival of the artillery and naval force. Progress of the siege notwithstanding.

An immense mass of French arrives.

* Ostridge's Annual Register, 1793, p. 272. † *Ibid.* 273.

quarters,

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LII.

1772

quarters, in an enormous mass. Attacking the army of Freytag the 7th of September, after several severe actions, in which the Germans made a most vigorous resistance, the French at last overpowered them by numbers, defeated them, and compelled them to make a very precipitate retreat. In this rout Freytag himself, and prince Adolphus of England, youngest son of his Britannic majesty, were taken prisoners, but in a short time rescued. The duke of York, from the defeat of the covering army, found it necessary to raise the siege. Before he had departed, the garrison, informed of Houchard's success, made a sally, in which they were repulsed with great loss; while the besiegers also suffered considerably, and among other officers were deprived of the celebrated engineer colonel Moncrief, who was killed by a cannon ball. Houchard now attacked a second time all that remained of the covering army, gained a complete and decisive victory, and with his daily increasing mass, hastened against the duke of York. The British commander found it absolutely necessary to withdraw from Dunkirk, to prevent his gallant band from being totally overpowered by such an infinite multitude of enemies. The unavoidable hurry of his retreat compelled our prince to leave his heavy artillery, and a great quantity of ammunition, which fell into the hands of the enemy. The military chest was preserved by being hastily put on board a frigate.

The British prince is obliged to abandon the attempt.

The miscarriage of this enterprize produced great censure among those who judge of plans by events; but at the time that the enterprize was concerted,

there

there were reasonable hopes of success; and the attainment of the object would have been extremely advantageous to Britain. The delay of the gunboats and artillery, must certainly have retarded the execution of the design; but the final disappointment was owing to causes which no man judging from military experience could have possibly anticipated. The new French expedient of arming in mass had not yet been known to the allies, and the rapid means of bringing forward their immense multitudes were no less extraordinary and astonishing. The prodigious hordes thus carried to the scene of warfare, must have discomfited the British project, however wise the undertaking, well concerted the plan, seasonable and efficient the preparations. Ends were to be sought, and means to be employed according to probabilities, founded in the experience that then existed. From so unprecedented a collection of armed multitudes, escape without very considerable loss was a great achievement; so great indeed, that the enemy conceived it impracticable: they apprehended that if general Houchard had discharged his duty, he might have effectually cut off the British retreat. Under this impression the French general was afterwards denounced, and suffered by the sentence of the revolutionary tribunal.

While the duke of York was engaged before Dunkirk, the allies invested Cambray, Bouchain, and Quesnoy; the two former they found impracticable, the latter they executed. Prince Cobourg having repulsed a detachment sent to the relief of Quesnoy, the fortress surrendered to general Clairfait on the 11th of September. Soon after this capture the

The French
mass com-
pels the
Austrians
to retire
behind the
Sambre.

C H A P.

LII.

1793.

the duke of York rejoined the confederates. The French army of the north, after raising the siege of Dunkirk, took a strong position in the neighbourhood of Maubeuge, where they were immediately blockaded by the whole united force of the allies, collected under the prince of Cobourg. The republican armies, after the accusation of Houchard, were entrusted to the command of Jourdain, who having formerly served in the French army in a humble rank, and afterwards became a shop-keeper in a petty village*, but having resumed the military profession, was by the French government deemed worthy of the supreme command; and, as the allies experienced, did signal honour to the penetration of his employers. Jourdain, on the 15th and 16th of October, attacked prince Cobourg with such numbers, vigour, and effect, as to compel him to abandon his position, and repass the Sambre. The French general now freed from blockade, was at liberty to employ offensive operations. Detachments were accordingly sent to make inroads into maritime Flanders. They took possession of Werwick and Menin, from whence they advanced to Furnes: they proceeded to Nieuport, which they besieged and greatly damaged; but the place was saved by having recourse to inundation. It was some time before the allied forces were able to stop the progress of the republicans, and their generals even trembled for the fate of Ostend. A considerable armament from England, however, being at that time preparing for the West Indies, under Sir Charles Grey, their

* See New Annual Register for 1793. It is there said he was a haberdasher.

destination was altered; and by arriving at this fortunate moment at Ostend, they saved the Low Countries for the present campaign.

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LII.

1793.

They force
the Prussians
to retreat.

On the Rhine, after the capture of Mentz, a number of petty actions took place, in which the French were generally successful; but no event of importance ensued†. During the month of September, the duke of Brunswick gained several advantages, and the allies invested Landau, the siege of which occupied the remainder of the campaign. A French army commanded by general Landremont, strongly posted on the Lauter, covered and protected this important fortress. On the 14th of October general Wurmser forced the strong lines of the enemy; and Lautreburg surrendered at discretion, after being evacuated by the republicans. The town of Weissebourg made a longer resistance; part of it, however, was unfortunately burned, and the French before they retreated, set fire to their magazines within the walls, as well as those at Alstade. The French, not disheartened by these losses, made repeated attacks on the enemy's lines, and at last were so successful, that the duke of Brunswick deemed it expedient to raise the siege of Landau, and retire into winter quarters. The armies of the Netherlands finished the campaign about the same time.

Although the continental campaign of 1793 was on the whole successful on the side of the allies, yet its termination was by no means equally auspicious as its preceding periods. From its commencement

The cam-
paign ter-
minates
much less
favourably
than its
commence-
ment pro-
mised.

† See New Annual Register for 1793. p. 192.

C H A P.
LII.

1793.

Gigantic
efforts of
France, and
want of
concert
among the
allies.

Catharine
prosecutes
her designs
against
Poland:

proposes a
second par-
tition of
that terri-
tory, and
invites the
king of
Prussia to
participate.

to the month of August, it had been progressively successful; then, however, the career of victory was arrested. In point of actual possession, the allies had preserved Holland, and recovered the Netherlands; had retaken Mentz, captured Conde, Quefnoy, and Valenciennes. But it required little discernment to see that the prospect was not now favourable to the confederates, and that the tide of success was turned. The allies never appeared to have established that concert of ends, and consistency of means, without which alliances cannot hope to succeed against a single and well compacted powerful opponent. If it was wise and expedient to seek the restoration of monarchy, their efforts should have been directed to that sole object. Separate aggrandizement, even were it in itself justifiable, necessarily created jealousy and distrust. The king of Prussia began to conceive that the successes of the campaign were advancing the power of Austria, while he had a share only in its expence and disasters.

From the dismemberment of France he could look for no accession, and was, besides, intent upon dismemberment in another quarter. Catharine having attained her wish of engaging the German powers in a war with France, had executed her intentions, of destroying the new constitution of Poland, which had tended to extricate that country from its dependence on herself. She invaded Poland with an army of a hundred thousand men, forcibly annulled the constitution at the diet, and to secure the concurrence of the king of Prussia, as well as gratify her own ambition,

bition, she proposed a second partition of the Polish territories; that the king of Prussia should for his share receive the cities of Dantzick and Thorn, with Great Poland, while her own portion of the spoilation was nearly half the remainder more contiguous to Russia. The Prussian king was more occupied in securing his spoils in Poland, which a band of patriotic heroes still endangered, than in seconding the emperor. On the other hand, the emperor was extremely jealous of the acquisitions of his Prussian ally; and the bands of the confederacy were evidently loosening.

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LII.
1793.

Frederic
William
intent on
securing the
spoils of
Poland.

On her own element, Britain, unincumbered by allies, began the war with signal success. In the West Indies, the valuable island of Tobago was captured by a British Squadron under admiral Laforey, about the beginning of April. From an early period of the French revolution, the West India islands belonging to France, and particularly St. Domingo, had been agitated and convulsed by the revolutionary spirit, and by premature and injudicious attempts to confer the rights of free citizens, in that part of the globe, upon the "people of colour," who constitute a large proportion of the inhabitants*. From the dreadful internal commotions, St. Domingo was a scene of devastation and bloodshed. In July, Fort Jeremie, and Cape Nicola Mole, being attacked by the British Squadron, surrendered themselves. In the gulph of St. Lawrence, the

Rapid
success of
the British
where they
fought
alone.

Conquests
in the West
and East
Indies.

* See Belsham's History, vol. v. page 101.

C H A P. islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, were cap-
LII. tured. In the East Indies, the company's troops,
1793. in the first campaign of the war, reduced Pon-
dicherry, and all the settlements of the French on
the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel.

C H A P. LIII.

Projects of political reform.—Club of united Irishmen.—Institution and objects.—Convention bill.—Britain—great numbers are infected with the desire of change.—Causes ignorance, vanity, and visionary enthusiasm, more than malignant intention.—Propensity in the lower orders to be spokesmen—arises from the free interchange of opinion which Britons enjoy—at this time is abused.—Dangerous tendency of certain political associations and sentiments.—Scotland.—Messrs. Muir and Palmer—trials of for sedition.—They are sentenced to transportation.—The punishment is represented as excessive, and even illegal.—Scotch convention for new modelling the constitution—consists chiefly of persons of low condition—dispersed by the civil power.—Their leaders are tried and sentenced to transportation.—Meeting of parliament.—Mr. Fox and his supporters recommend peace—arguments against and for.—Mr. Pitt's reasoning on the war, and the internal system of France.—Lord Mornington's view of the subject.—A great majority approve of the continuance of the war.—Messrs. Fox and Sheridan impute to the combination the astonishing efforts of France.—Discussion of the question with whom should we treat.—The opponents of the war predict the dissolution of the confederacy, and the triumph of the French.—Mr. Fox complains that the object of the war is indefinite—contrasted with former wars.—He prophesies that the war with France, like the war with America, would terminate in disappointment.—Various motions for peace—rejected.—Questions respecting the trials for sedition in Scotland.—Mr. Adam's proposed amendment of the Scottish criminal law—debate negatived.—Proposed enquiry into the conduct
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the Scottish judges.—His speech on that subject.—Reply of the lord advocate.—The motion of Mr. Adam is rejected.—Third proposition of Mr. Adam for assimilating the Scottish to the English criminal law.—Masterly speech of Mr. Adam on that subject.—Answer of Mr. Dundas.—Reply of Mr. Fox.—The proposition is negatived.—Progress of the innovating spirit among the lower ranks.—Seditious lectures against the British constitution, and kingly government.—Proceedings of the democratic societies.—Plan of a national convention—discovered by ministers—leaders arrested, and papers seized.—Committees of both houses appointed to examine their papers—from the reports Mr. Pitt proposes a bill for detaining suspected persons without allowing them the benefit of the habeas corpus act—bill passed into a law.—Ministers, including lord Loughborough the chancellor, consider the crimes charged as high treason.—Lord Thurlow asserts, that by the law of England they are not treason.—Supplies, subsidies, and taxes.—Debate on the introduction of Hessian troops.—Apprehensions of an invasion.—Voluntary contributions for levying troops.—Session closes.—Internal proceedings in France.—Jacobin faction and Robespierre paramount.—Iniquitous trial, condemnation, and punishment of the queen.—Brissot and the other Girond prisoners put to death.—Orleans shares the same fate.—Danton overborne by Robespierre.—The Parisian mob adore Robespierre.—Real talents and character.

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LIII.

1793.
Project of
political
reform.

THE chief internal occurrences of this year regarded projects of political reform. In Ireland a society was established for promoting a complete emancipation of the Catholics; that is a thorough exemption from all legal disabilities, and a radical reform of parliament, on the principles of universal

sal suffrage and annual elections. This club, constructed on the model of the affiliated Jacobins, took the name of the *United Irishmen*, which was afterwards productive of such dangerous consequences. In the Irish parliament an act had been passed, granting relief to the Catholics, but by no means so extensive as their supporters in and out of parliament desired. They were allowed to exercise all civil and military offices under the crown, except in the very highest departments of the law and state; and they were prohibited from sitting in parliament. The executive government appeared well inclined to extend the relief, but the apprehensions of the Protestant party were so deeply rooted, as to render it inexpedient in the legislature to proceed any farther at that period. The united Irishmen, as a party, were not particularly connected with the Catholics, but consisted of the votaries of innovation* in general; held assemblies for concerting and preparing means to promote their schemes of change. These meetings being considered as dangerous in the present ferment, a law was passed by the Irish parliament for preventing such assemblies; being specifically described, both in nature and purpose, so as to restrain innovating cabals: the new act was known by the title of the convention bill. While the legislature endeavoured to prevent pernicious assemblies in Ireland, projects were formed in Britain by bodies of individuals for holding a convention, which should speak the national voice, and effect such changes as in the judg-

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Club of
United
Irishmen.

Institution
and objects.

Convention
bill.

* See Reports of Irish Committees in 1797 and 1798.

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Britain.
Great num-
bers are in-
fected with
the desire
of change.

Causes—
ignorance,
vanity, and
visionary
enthusiasm,
more than
malignant
intentions.

Propensity
in the lower
orders to be
spoke-men ;

arises from
the free in-
terchange

ments of these politicians should appear necessary for the regeneration of Britain.

The revolutionary doctrines of France spreading into this island, produced a desire of change, which was different in object and extent according to the circumstances, knowledge, and character of their votaries. Men of desperate fortune or reputation might desire a subversion of government, in hopes of profiting by the general confusion, and no doubt there were such men in the clubs which were supposed to seek revolution. These were a kind of associates that revolutionary leaders might be sure to acquire, according to the believed probability of success. But, if their conduct be candidly reviewed, by far the greater number of the associated votaries of indefinite change will appear to have been misled by folly, ignorance, or visionary enthusiasm, rather than prompted by malignant intentions. A passion which produced the addition of many members to these clubs, was vanity. They wished to make a figure in spheres for which their education and condition rendered them totally unfit. The supposed exaltation of the people in France, inspired many well-disposed manufacturers, mechanics, tradesmen, and peasants with a desire of reaching the same distinction, and stimulated them to exercise their talents as orators and lawgivers. There is, indeed, in the lower orders of our countrymen a peculiar propensity to oratory : the free constitution under which they live empowers them to utter their sentiments and opinions with open boldness ; the love of social and convivial intercourse very naturally following an unrestrained in-
terchange

terchange of thoughts and feelings, produces clubs, which at this period were very numerous. These requiring some kind of methodical arrangement, introduced some kind of order and system in addresses and replies beyond the desultory irregularity of conversation. Hence arose debate, which generated emulation to distinguish themselves in their circle of companions; the members respectively tried to be spokesmen. As their oratorial talents, in their own apprehension, increased, they wished for a wider field of exercise; this they found in vestries or other meetings of local arrangement; or sometimes betook themselves to debating societies, where they could exhibit their eloquence and wisdom on subjects of erudition, philosophy, and politics. From these causes there was, especially through the great towns, a pre-disposition in people of low rank, without education and literature, to recreate themselves with speeches and dissertations*. The visions of French equality held out to their fancies and passions pleasing images and powerful incentives; increased the objects of their eloquence and political exertions, proposed so wide fields for exercise, and promised such rewards as stimulated great numbers to seek change, less from dissatisfaction with the present than from sanguine expectations of the future; and rendered them desirous of reforming assemblies, not so much with a view to overthrow the established constitution, to

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1793.
of opinion
which Brit-
tons enjoy:

at this time
is abused.

* At the trial of Hardy, the shoemaker, one Wills a dancing master, who had accompanied the defendant to the Corresponding Society, being interrogated as to his own motives for resorting to that meeting, replied that he had a pleasure in hearing the conversation of *clever* men. See State Trials in 1794.

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Dangerous
tendency of
certain poli-
tical affec-
tions and
sentiments,

crush king, lords, and commons, as to distinguish themselves in the proposed conventions. That some of the ringleaders desired the subversion of our existing establishments, admits very little doubt; but that a total misconception of the purposes of their leaders, vanity and the love of distinction, and not treasonable motives, actuated the chief portion of their votaries we may candidly and fairly presume. But, whatever might be the intention of the individuals respectively, the tendency of such assemblages collectively, in a season of revolutionary enthusiasm, was evidently dangerous; and required the unremitting vigilance of government, to restrain and correct delusion and to chastise mischievous deluders.

Scotland.

Messrs.
Muir and
Palmer,

trials of, for
sedition.

In Scotland, two active agitators of political change, Messrs. Muir and Palmer, the former an advocate, the latter a dissenting clergyman, were tried for sedition, charged to have been committed in writing and other acts. The following facts were established against Mr. Muir at his trial: he had actively dispersed in and about Paisley and Glasgow Paine's Rights of Man and other books and pamphlets of a similar tendency; in conversation expressed his wishes and hopes of changes on the model of France; and purchased works hostile to the British constitution, especially Paine, for people too poor to buy them themselves and so ignorant as to be easily impressed by his exhortations*. It was farther proved that he was an active

* Such as Thomas Wilson, barber, Ann Fisher, servant-maid, and others in equally humble stations, See Muir's Trial.

and leading member in societies for promoting such doctrines and conduct as Thomas Paine inculcates, and that his rank and situation afforded great weight and influence to his exhortations. Mr. Palmer, an Unitarian preacher at Dundee, had been no less active in the east than Mr. Muir in the west, and indeed much more violent. He had either composed or promoted addresses, which stimulated his votaries to enmity against the House of Commons and the existing orders, and declared the highest privilege of man to be universal suffrage; inveighed against the constituted authorities, their counsels and measures, as oppressive and tyrannical; called on the people to join in resisting these oppressions, and adjured them by every thing that was dear to them, to combine for the preservation of their perishing liberty and the recovery of their long lost rights. These and other publications similar in inflammatory rapsody, were dispersed with ardent activity by Mr. Palmer, and by a very strenuous agent, George Mealmaker, weaver*. There could be no doubt that such conduct was seditious, and no valid objection could be made to the evidence. The jury were therefore bound to bring in a verdict *guilty* in each of these cases. In Scotland the sentence in cases of sedition, rests with the judges; and in both these cases the punishment was, that they should be transported for the space of fourteen years beyond the seas, to such place as his Majesty, with the advice of his privy council, should think proper.

They are
sentenced to
transportation.

* See Trial of Palmer, at the Autumn Circuit at Perth
1793.

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The punishment is represented as excessive, and even illegal.

Both these gentlemen possessed fair and unimpeached moral characters, and were deemed enthusiasts in what they conceived to be right, and not intentionally malignant incendiaries. Though this circumstance did not diminish the mischievous tendency of their conduct, yet lessening their moral guilt, it excited a considerable degree of compassion for their destiny. The punishment, indeed, was by very eminent members of the law of Scotland deemed and represented as an assumption of power by the court, which was not allowed by the statute enacting the penalties consequent on the species of sedition charged in the indictment. They were tried on an accusation of *leafing** making, a term, which in the Scotch law means stirring up sedition, by spreading false reports between the king and his subjects. It was asserted by Mr. Henry Erskine and others that the punishment annexed by the law of Scotland to this crime, was outlawry†, and not transportation; that the judges might sentence the convicts to be exiled from Scotland, but that their judgement could not extend to their conveyance to any other place. Others who were neither disposed nor competent to such legal disquisition, censured the judges for adopting the most rigorous mode that even by

* *Leafing*, a Scotch word, in its general import signifies a lie; in law it is applied to the particular species of falsehood described in the text.

† The punishments are three, fine, imprisonment, or banishment: the question respecting the last was whether it meant merely the *exilium* of the civil law (outlawry), or the *deportatio*, (transportation). There were very respectable authorities on both sides.

their

their own hypothesis could be chosen. Many, however, deemed the castigation wholesome in example, and beneficial in tendency.

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In the end of October, 1793, a club of persons, entertaining similar extravagant ideas of reform as Messrs. Muir and Palmer, meeting at Edinburgh, denominated themselves *the Scotch convention of delegates* for obtaining annual parliaments and universal suffrage. This notable assembly consisted chiefly of tradesmen and mechanics, a few farmers, many of lower situation, and one or two men of abilities and knowledge, who were unfortunately smitten with the revolutionary contagion. These persons having met, adopted the modes and phraseology of the French convention, accosted each other by the term of *citizen*, divided themselves into *sections*, granted the honour of *sittings*, in humble imitation of their model; and proposed to concert measures with the innovating clubs, especially the London corresponding society, for the attainment of their object. It is remarkable that those who sought universal equality of political privileges, claimed this equality as *an inherent right*, and upon this assumption founded all their theories. Now political power is the inherent right of no individual: every man has a natural right to govern himself, but has no natural right to govern others*: government is the creature of expediency. In every society those ought to govern who are most fit for promo-

Scotch convention for new modelling the constitution,

consists chiefly of persons of low condition.

* See this doctrine very ably explained by the learned and profound Ferguson's Principles of Moral and Political Science, vol. ii. p. 471, on the exercise of legislative power.

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dispersed by
the civil
power.Their
leaders are
tried and
sentenced to
transporta-
tion.1794-
Meeting of
parliament.

ting the general good. All men are not equally qualified for legislation, therefore it is not expedient that all men should have an equal suffrage, either in legislation or in constituting a legislature: the political inequality which these visionary innovators sought to reduce, arose from unequal means of advancing the general welfare which these levellers professed to pursue. On this absurd theory of human rights, without any proof of expediency, these agitators proceeded; but before they had brought their deliberations to a conclusion, they were interrupted by the civil power*, and dispersed. Skirving, Margarot, and Gerald, three of their most active members, were tried for sedition, and received sentence of transportation; which judgement incurred the same censure as the punishment that was appointed for Muir and Palmer. The conduct of the judges who passed the sentence was very much blamed, not only by democrats, but by the constitutional opponents of government; and was not completely approved by many others who were well affected to ministers; but the merits of the judgements afterwards underwent a discussion in parliament.

The session opened on the 21st of January, 1794; and the diversities of political opinion continued to resolve themselves into three classes, the same in principle as before, though somewhat varied in detail, from the course of events. A few, at the

* On this occasion Mr. Elder, the lord provost, peculiarly distinguished himself by his activity, resolution, and prompt decision.

head

head of whom was Mr. Burke, deemed war against regicides indispensibly necessary, until monarchy should be restored. A small, but greater number, reckoned the war unwise from the commencement, and a peace conducive to its professed purposes, to be at present attainable. The season of important victory, (according to Mr. Fox and others) all wise politicians thought the best opportunity for concluding a peace. The continuance of war, instead of subjugating France, tended to drive her to desperate efforts*. We had seen in her recent exertions arming her people in mass, and hurrying them on to the scene of war with unheard of rapidity, the consequences of invading her territories. Continued attempts to trench upon her dominions, would only drive her to still more extraordinary efforts. Besides, to what purpose was the continuance of war; the professed objects of the British government had been attained in the delivery of Holland, and the expulsion of the French from the Netherlands. Unless we proposed to restore monarchy, which ministers said we did not, we were now fighting without an object. A very numerous body, at the head of which was Mr. Pitt, maintained that the object of the war was and uniformly had been the same; the SECURITY of Britain, and general tranquillity†. The present terrible system of France was totally incompatible with these objects: in its dreadful nature it could not last. The people, if properly seconded and supported, would

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Mr. Fox
and his
supporters
recommend
peace.

Arguments
against and
for.

Mr. Pitt's
reasoning on
the war and
the internal
system of
France.

* See Parliamentary Debates, 21st January, 1794.

† Ibid.

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generally revolt against such an oppressive, rapacious, and desolating government. With the present rulers we could not make peace; but we might expect that their sway would be of short duration: the efforts of the terrible system had far exceeded any reasonable or probable expectation; but the resources from which they arose, so desperate and iniquitous, afforded in themselves the most certain symptoms and indications of the approaching decay of that fabric with which they were connected. The leading feature in the French revolutionary character, (said the minister) is a spirit of military enterprise, exerted not for the purposes of systematic ambition, but every where in its progress spreading terror and desolation. We are called in the present age to witness the political and moral phenomenon of a mighty and civilized people * formed into an artificial horde of banditti, throwing off all the restraints which have influenced men in social life, displaying a savage valour directed by a sanguinary spirit, forming rapine and destruction into a system, and perverting into their detestable purposes all the talents and ingenuity which they derived from their advanced stage of civilization, all the refinements of art, and the discoveries of science. We behold them uniting the utmost savageness and ferocity of design with consummate contrivance and skill in execution, and seemingly engaged in no less than a conspiracy to exterminate from the face of the earth all honour, humanity, justice, and religion. In this state can there be any question but to resist,

* Mr. Pitt's speech, 21st January, 1794. Ibid.

where

where resistance alone can be effectual, till such time, as by the blessing of providence upon our endeavours, we shall have secured the independence of this country, and the general interests of Europe. All the succeeding parties which had prevailed from the deposition of the king, however adverse to each other, had agreed in hostility to this country: the alternative of war and peace did not at present exist. Before we could relinquish the principles on which the war commenced, proof was necessary, either that the opinions which we had conceived of the views of France were erroneous, that the war was become desperate and impracticable, or that, from some improvement in the system and principles of the French, the justice and necessity which prompted us to commence the war, no longer co-operated. Lord Mornington spoke on the same side, and displayed very extensive information, and considerable ability. According to the representation of his lordship, the French views of aggrandizement were unlimited. Their desire of conquest sprang from principles which were subversive of all regular government. The avowals and exhortations of their most admired writers fully proved their schemes of boundless aggression, and their determined hostility to this country*. But a still surer proof was their conduct, which was uniformly and consistently hostile to this and every

Lord
Morning-
ton's view
of
the subject.

* To support his argument, his lordship quoted many extracts from French writings, especially from a pamphlet by Mr. Brissot, which had recently reached England, and which breathed hostility to Britain.

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other nation within the reach of its influence. Our cause was originally just ; the whole series of events confirmed its justice. But an important point to be considered was the probability of success : the recent efforts of the French arose from causes that could not long exist ; these were the atrocious tyranny of the present government, which embraced men, money, liberty, property, and life, within its grasp. The dreadful fire was consuming the fuel by which it was nourished : their expenditure was enormous ; their finances must be speedily exhausted*, and leave them no longer the means of so formidable hostilities : they would be compelled to succumb to the just and systematic exertions of the allies. But it was by our warlike efforts only that we could secure ourselves from the inroads of revolutionary France. In proportion as this system of tyranny consumed the property of France, it must endeavour to repair its disordered finances by foreign plunder. It must be the immediate interest of a government founded upon principles contrary to those of surrounding nations, to propagate the doctrines abroad by which it subsists at home, and

* This was an argument often repeated by Mr. Pitt at different periods of the war. It was partly founded on the reports and calculations of sir Francis d'Ivernois, who very accurately and justly explained the sources of finance known to former experience ; but in his estimate, not sufficiently allowing for the enthusiastic spirit by which the French republicans were now actuated, did not consider its creative effects. Thence it was that all predictions of French bankruptcy, founded in the application of common rules to a case totally beyond their reach, were completely falsified.

to subvert every constitution which can form a disadvantageous contrast to its own absurdities. Nothing could secure us against the future violence of the French, but an effectual reduction of their power. That was a purpose which we had the most reasonable prospects of ultimately accomplishing, and the strongest inducements to persevere. But even were the French rulers, instead of being eagerly resolved to persevere in a war indispensibly necessary to their usurped domination, disposed to accede to terms of equitable accommodation, where was the assurance of their stability? What reliance could we repose on the performance of their engagements? What was the purpose of attempting to negotiate with a government utterly unable to fulfil its stipulations? Not only the characters, the dispositions, and the interests of those who exercised the powers of government of France, but the very nature of that system they had established, rendered a treaty of peace upon safe and honourable terms impracticable at present, and consequently required a vigorous and unremitting prosecution of the war. A very great majority in parliament, convinced that peace could not be preserved with the present rulers of France, and confident that their extraordinary efforts would speedily exhaust their own source, approved the continuance of the war, and its most vigorous prosecution.

Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan persevered in maintaining the inexpediency of the war, the improbability of success, and the wisdom of peace. They denied that France had been hostile to this country. The chief charge of the present rulers against their predecessors

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A great majority approves of the continuance of the war.

The opponents of the war impute to the combination the astonishing efforts of France.

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Messrs. Fox
and Sheridan
predict
the dissolu-
tion of the
confedera-
cy, and the
triumph of
the French.

predecessors was, that they involved their country in a war with Britain contrary to the interests and wishes of the people. But whencesoever the war had originated, the exertions and events afforded no reasonable ground for expectation that the objects, even if just, were attainable. The efforts of the French arose from the enthusiasm of conceived liberty and patriotism. So devoted (it was said) are the whole people of France to the cause which they have espoused, so determined are they to maintain the struggle in which they have engaged, so paramount and domineering is the enthusiastic spirit of liberty in their bosoms, so insignificant, comparatively, are all other considerations, and finally, so bitter and active is their animosity against the conspiring powers which surround them, that individual property has ceased to be regarded even by the possessor, but as subsidiary to the public cause; and the government which had demanded these unprecedented sacrifices, yet retains its power, and does not appear to have impaired its popularity*. France, by the pressure of the allies upon her frontier, had become a school of military wonder; and if other governments persisted in their design of thus goading her to almost præternatural exertions, we should see a military republic firmly established in the heart of Europe†. Such was the energetic spirit of the French, that we might be sure, with

* See Mr. Sheridan's speech on the first day of the session, 1794. Parliamentary Debates.

† See Marquis of Lansdown's speech, on his motion for peace.

the resources that spirit would call into action, we could never succeed: In answering the ministerial objection, with whom could we treat, we might negotiate with the existing rulers, and depend for adherence to pacific engagements, neither on the justice or stability of the present set, but on their interest, and the interests of their successors, whoever they might be, and of the whole French nation. Interest, and not good faith, had been our security in our various treaties with the despotic princes of France. The confederacy, in which we endeavoured to make an impression upon France, composed of heterogeneous materials pursuing different objects, Mr. Fox strongly and repeatedly predicted, must be soon dissolved. If the objects of the war had been just and wise, the plans were disjointed, inconsistent, and consequently ineffectual. But ministers, said Mr. Fox, never defined the object: they vaguely told us we were fighting for *security*; but wherein was that security to consist. In former wars our objects had been definite, to prevent the aggrandizement of France*, by the accession of one of her princes to the throne of Spain†; to protect our merchantmen from the search of Spaniards‡; to defend our colonies from the encroachments of France§; to resist the interference of foreign nations, in disputes between us and our colonies§. There the objects, whether right or wrong, were definite: but here they were barren generalities, mere abstractions: if, as

* War 1689.

† War 1702.

‡ War 1739.

§ War 1756.

§ War 1778.

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Mr. Fox
prophe-
cies that the
war with
France, like
the war with
America,
would ter-
minate in
disappoint-
ment.

Various
motions for
peace are
ineffectual.

ministers professed, we were not warring for the restoration of the Bourbon princes to the throne of France. From their conduct, however, he was convinced they did propose that restoration which he predicted no foreign force would ever produce. He had spoken, and would always continue to speak, against a war which sought no object beneficial to Great Britain; required exertions that drained her resources, and anticipated the products of future industry. He prophesied that the war with France, like the war with America, would terminate in disappointment. We were incurring an enormous expence, in return for which we had no prospect of advantage or compensation. Such conduct might be varnished by splendid eloquence, or justified by sophistical logic, yet when viewed by common sense and common prudence, it was infatuated blindness that was producing consequences which the present and future ages would have strong reasons to lament and deplore. The minister merely played on the passions which he had himself enflamed, without addressing the reason or consulting the interest of his countrymen. These arguments were repeated both on direct motions for peace*, and various other questions connected with the war, but produced no effect on the majorities in parliament.

Next to peace and war, questions arising from internal discontent, projects of innovation, and the prosecutions which some abettors of these had un-

* February 17th, by the Marquis of Lansdown: May 30th, by the Duke of Bedford and Mr. Fox, in their respective houses.

dergone, occupied the chief share of parliamentary deliberation. Messrs. Muir and Palmer, and the sentenced members of the Scottish convention, in consequence of the power left by the judgment with his majesty and council to appoint the place of deportation, had been ordered to be sent to Botany Bay. In the execution of their sentence they had been sent on board transports at Woolwich, along with other convicts destined for the same place. Many who admitted the justness of the judgment, deprecated the severity of the treatment; but a stronger ground was taken in parliament: it was maintained, that the sentence was not legal, and that the criminal jurisprudence of Scotland required a revision, which should render it more definite and precise, and put it on the same footing with the penal law of England. Motions to these intents were brought forward by Mr. Adam, a counsellor of great eminence, deeply conversant both in Scottish and English law, with moral and political science, which could appreciate their separate and comparative merits. With this view, he proposed to bring forward two bills; the one of which should grant an appeal to the lords of parliament from the judgment of the courts of justiciary and circuit in Scotland, in matters of law: the other should assimilate the criminal law of England and Scotland, that crimes and misdemeanours affecting the state should be on the same footing in both countries; that a grand jury should be held in Scotland in the same cases as in England; and that the power of the lord advocate should be the same as the power of the attorney general. These objects Mr. Adam had

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Questions
respecting
the trials for
sedition in
Scotland.

Mr. Adam's
proposed
amendment
of the Scot-
tish criminal
law.

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in view before, and in the preceding session had announced his intention of proposing alterations which should assimilate the criminal law of the two countries. But the recent trials in Scotland, in his apprehension, had rendered the discussion of the subject more urgently necessary; and made it adviseable to change the intended form of the propositions so as to include a declaratory and retrospective, as well as an enacting and prospective operation. His first proposition was introduced to the house of commons on the 4th of February. Its purpose was, to establish an appeal from the court of justiciary to the Lords, and to have a clause inserted which should subject the sentences of 1793 to the projected revival. Having stated historically and juridically the facts and tendencies respecting the law as it now stood, and its administration; he observed, that there was not only a strong analogy between the criminal codes of England and of Scotland in the great purposes of all penal laws, but a striking resemblance also in their respective course of proceedings. Their mode of trial by jury was the same; every thing was the same except one circumstance; a right in the house of lords to revise the sentences of the court of justiciary and the circuit courts. With regard to the inconvenience that might accrue by bringing cases of criminal law from Scotland to a tribunal that did not understand the system of Scottish criminal law, this was an objection that applied much less to penal than civil cases, subjected by the union to the appeal which he now proposed*. Criminal

* Speech of Mr. Adam, introductory to his motion. Parliamentary Debates, 4th February, 1794.

laws had, in all countries, a considerable likeness, because there was in all countries an abhorrence of crimes; whereas civil laws greatly differed under different circumstances, objects, and pursuits of the several societies. Mr. Adam moved for leave to bring in a bill to give an appeal to the lords in parliament from judgments and sentences of the court of justiciary and circuit courts in Scotland, in matters of law, and that this be referred to a committee of the whole house. The motion was opposed on the following ground: it was a total change in the law, as it had existed both since and before the union. No appeal had ever lain from the justiciary court either to the parliament of Scotland or the parliament of Great Britain; there was no reason for the proposed innovation, as no evil had been felt under the established mode. The greater number of the inhabitants of Scotland were perfectly satisfied with the administration of law as it now stood. They were persuaded of its excellence, and sensible of the blessings which they enjoyed under its protection. It was impolitic and hazardous to change a system experienced to be beneficial for a system untried, and consequently of doubtful operation in that country, and not sought by the people for whose benefit it was intended*. After a great display of legal and political ability by the mover, his supporters †, and his opponents ‡, the motion was negatived by a

* These arguments are to be found principally in the speech of Mr. Anstruther. See Parliamentary Debates, February 4th, 1794.

† Chiefly Messrs. Adair and Fox.

‡ Messrs. Anstruther, Watson, and the Lord Advocate. See Parliamentary Debates.

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1794.
proposed
enquiry into
the conduct
of the Scot-
tish judges :

his speech on
that subject.

majority of a hundred and twenty-six to thirty-one.

Defeated on the question of appeal, Mr. Adam proposed an enquiry which he had intended to have made a part of the same bill. He moved for a copy of the record of the trials of Messrs. Muir and Palmer, on the 24th of February ; and on the 10th of March proposed the revision of the sentence passed

upon these two gentlemen. He undertook to prove, first, that the crimes charged against Messrs. Muir and Palmer were what the law of Scotland calls *leasing making*, or public libel ; that, by the law of Scotland, the punishment annexed to leasing making was fine, imprisonment, or banishment, but not transportation : that the acts proved against these gentlemen did not amount to leasing making, the crime charged in the indictment. If the mover made good these positions, the obvious inference was, that the Scottish judges had, in the late sentences, greatly exceeded their power ; and if they did so, the illegality would be, in imposing such a punishment, extremely tyrannical. The mover supported his legal positions by very extensive knowledge, juridical and historical, reciprocally illustrating and enforcing each other ; he endeavoured from statute, analogy, and precedent, explained by their civil and political reasons, to establish his doctrines ; and attempted to prove that the acts, cases, and decisions which he quoted, were not detached or insulated, but all resulted from the same spirit and principles, operating most effectually at the best times, under the most admired authorities and purest administrations of justice. He also contended, that transportation to places be-
yond

yond seas neither was nor could be a part of the Scottish law before the union, because there were no places beyond seas in the possession of Scotland ; and no act had since the union, been passed, allowing Scottish courts to transport in cases of sedition. On these grounds he denied the right of the Scottish judges to inflict such a punishment if the crime had been established ; and farther, asserted that the charge was not proved. Having thus endeavoured to shew that criminal justice had been perverted, he forcibly and eloquently stated the evils, moral and political, which must arise from such perversion ; and concluded with moving the production of the records.

The lord advocate, chief law officer of the crown in Scotland, had officially acted as the leading public accuser against those persons ; and now vindicated the judgments in question as legal and meritorious. He endeavoured to prove, that though banishment, by the English law, might not be the same with transportation, they were regarded as synonymous by the Scottish law : this (he said) was their acceptation uniformly in the opinion of criminal courts and lawyers ; and he quoted cases to illustrate his doctrine. Such construction, he argued, was perfectly conformable to the practice of the Scottish judiciary courts, and the Scottish privy council ; and he particularly stated instances that had occurred in the reign of Charles II. to justify his exposition. After endeavouring to prove that such was the law, he vindicated its recent exercise. The persons in question had been extremely active in sedition, and deserved exemplary punish-

Reply of the
lord advo-
cate.

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The motion
is negatived.Third propo-
sition of
Mr. Adam.Masterly
speech of
Mr. Adam
on that
subject.Answer of
Mr. Secre-
tary Dundas.

ment. The chief speakers * on both sides took a very active share in this debate, which produced a display of legal and political ability that has been rarely exceeded in parliament: the motion was negatived by a great majority. Notwithstanding these repeated disappointments, the manly spirit of Mr. Adam proceeded in the course which he conceived to be right. On the 25th of March he introduced a third motion for regulating the judiciary courts of Scotland: the general object of his proposition was the assimilation of the Scottish to the English criminal law, in its substance, sanctions, rules, and forms of administration. The discussion of this subject necessarily introduced a repetition of certain arguments which had been already used; but also intermingled new matter. The mover endeavoured to prove, by accurate enumeration, the general incompetence of the Scottish criminal system to answer the purposes of substantial justice; he kept his present proposition distinct from the special subjects and enquiries which, at his motion, the house had lately been discussing; and considered the present as a general question, which derived its reasons and importance from the general system of Scottish penal law and its administration. Mr. Secretary Dundas denied the necessity or policy of a change in a system with

* Messrs. Sheridan and Fox on the one hand, and Mr. Pitt on the other, exerted themselves in respectively supporting Messrs. Adam and Dundas. Mr. Dundas's exhibition on this subject was universally allowed to be able, and worthy of the high office which he filled. Mr. Adam's speech was, by all parties, deemed one of the first that had ever been delivered upon a subject of law within that house, and made a very great addition to a character fast rising in eminence.

which

which the people subject to it were thoroughly contented ; instituted a comparison between the Scottish and English law, and endeavoured to prove, that in many cases the Scottish penal code was much superior. Respecting sedition, when he saw the attacks that were daily made on the very vitals of the constitution ; when he observed this systematically done ; when he found that works in their nature hostile to the government of the country, and addressed to the lower orders of society, were spread with indefatigable industry, he must avow his conviction that the punishment annexed to this crime by the law of England was not sufficiently severe to deter persons from this practice, and that the legislature must adopt a different mode of procedure upon that subject *. The lord advocate, with more minute specification, defended the law of Scotland and its administration. The attorney general, with his usual acuteness and moderation, defended the criminal justice of Scotland, as adapted to the general purposes of penal codes ; the sentiments, character, pursuits, and habits of the people ; and as firmly fixed by the articles of the union ; but he delivered no opinion on the competency of the English penal code, as it then stood, to restrain sedition. The seemingly incidental observations of Mr. Dundas respecting the inadequacy of the English laws, did not escape the penetration of Mr. Fox. He appeared to consider it not merely as an illustrative remark on the subject before the house, but as an indirect intimation of an agitated change, and intended to sound the opinion and feelings of the commons : he warned

Reply of
Mr. Fox.

* See Parliamentary Debates, March 25th, 1794.

him

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The propo-
sition is ne-
gative.

him to beware how he meddled with the liberties of Englishmen, and to consider well before he increased punishment. This third motion of Mr. Adam experienced a similar fate with the two former ; and was negatived by a very great majority. Petitions from Messrs. Muir and Palmer were laid before the house, praying the reconsideration of the sentences ; but the commons refused to interpose in a judgment which had been regularly pronounced by a competent court. Those important subjects which Mr. Adam submitted to the discussion of the house of commons, were also introduced before the lords by the Earl of Lauderdale. His lordship's motion was negatived without a division ; and the lord chancellor proposed a resolution, declaring, " there was no ground for interfering in the established courts of criminal justice as administered under the constitution, and by which the rights, liberties, and properties of all ranks of subjects were protected." Thus finished the parliamentary consideration of subjects which warmly interested the public mind. Messrs. Muir, Palmer, and also the condemned members of the Scottish convention, were sent to Botany Bay. Many out of parliament, who usually coincided with administration, reckoned this punishment extremely severe. Though unable to follow Mr. Adam through the researches of legal disquisition, or the depths of legal science, yet, conceiving the convicts in question to be rather misled by enthusiasm than prompted by malignant intentions, they thought that the punishment far exceeded the moral guilt. Others, who deemed severe punishment necessary, argued, that whatever the

the intention might be, the tendency was so pernicious as to require the most rigorous chastisement which the law permitted, for the future prevention of so dangerous incendiaries; but this last reasoning proceeding on a supposition that the law did permit such sentences, could make no impression on those who denied the premises.

The punishment of these agitators in Scotland did not deter innovating projectors in England from advancing with their schemes. During the preceding year clubs had met, both in full assemblies and detached committees, to project plans and devise expedients for effecting the manifold and radical changes which the British constitution required to suit the ideas which these persons had formed of the perfection of political systems. Of the three societies which we have already recorded to have congratulated the French convention on the downfall of monarchy, the revolution club appears to have ceased its collective existence; most of its members being probably joined to the other fraternities. The other two, the constitutional and corresponding societies, very sedulously made certain results of their deliberations known to the world by advertisements, subscribed with the names, and *sanctioned by the authority* of Mr. Daniel Adams *, under clerk, and
Mr.

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Progress of
the innovat-
ing spirit
among the
lower ranks.

Proceedings
of the demo-
cratical so-
cieties.

* This Mr. Daniel Adams I have seen before he betook himself to his legislative occupations. He then appeared to be a common-place, harmless, vain man, desirous of what, in colloquial language, is called *dabbing*. His chief subject of conversation was the high company which he kept, and his own importance in the said company. I have no doubt that the man was
actuated

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Meeting at
Chalk Farm.Lectures of
John Thel-
wal against
the British
constitution
and kingly
government.

Mr. Thomas Hardy, shoe-maker, respectively, secretaries to the constitutional and corresponding society. These were seconded by hand-bills and pamphlets, summoning the people to associate for the attainment of radical reform. In the course of their preparations they had called several meetings; especially one at Chalk Farm, near Hampstead. There several intemperate speeches were made; and when festivity intermingled with politics, very inflammatory toasts were proposed, and the meeting was undoubtedly seditious. Some of its most active members, not only at that time, but in their habitual conduct, manifested themselves inimical to the British constitution, as far as their enmity could operate; hostile to kingly government of all kinds, and desirous of establishing a jacobinical democracy. Among these one of the most noted was John Thelwal, destined to the same kind of perpetual remembrance which has followed John Ball, Wat Tyler, Jack Cade, and Kett the tanner, those celebrated votaries of radical reform in their days. This John Thelwal, besides his joint efforts with others of the corresponding societies, was singly and separately instrumental to the purposes of sedition by a kind of

actuated by the same love of distinction in his reforming projects, and that no inconsiderable motive to his undertaking the office of secretary was to read his own name at the bottom of the advertisements. Indeed, as I have already said, after considerable enquiry and reflection, I think no one passion produced more votaries of change than vanity. But whatever might be the spring that set such an engine in motion, the dangerous operation was the same when it was actually moved.

periodical

periodical declamations, which he styled *political lectures*. These lectures were chiefly comments on Tom Paine's works and similar performances, with abuse of the present constitution and government, more direct and pointed to its specific measures than even the efforts of Paine himself. With the most scurrilous invectives against establishments, which he called usurpation, his harangues mingled vehement exhortations * to revolution, or, as he phrased it, to resume the rights of nature †. Government observed the open proceedings of these societies and individuals, and suspected the secret machinations of the ringleaders : to discover the truth they adopted the policy which is necessary in apprehended plots ‡; and employed despicable instruments that are easily to be found in all great cities, as spies that were to attend the conventicles of sedition, and to become members of the societies, in order to betray the secrets with which they might be entrusted. In consequence of discoveries which were obtained through these and other channels, ministers ordered

* See Thelwal's Tribune, passim.

† See Rights of Nature, in opposition to the usurpation of establishment, by the same, passim.

‡ The anti-ministerial writings of the times severely inveighed against government for employing wretches so very destitute of honour, and thence inferred to be so unworthy of belief. But the best and wisest statesman, in investigating secret and associated villany, must often make use of worthless instruments. As well might Cicero be blamed for employing the prostitute Fulvia in eliciting information respecting a conspiracy which he deemed dangerous to Rome, as ministers for employing such fellows as Goslin, Lynham, Taylor, and Groves, to elicit information concerning a conspiracy which they conceived dangerous to Britain.

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Leaders ar-
rested, and
their papers
seized.

Plan of a
national
convention
discovered
by ministers.

Hardy and Adams to be arrested, and their papers to be seized; and immediately after Thelwall, Loveit a hair-dresser, Martin an attorney, and two or three others, to be apprehended. In a few days the arrestations extended to men of higher rank and reputation: Mr. Joyce, a respectable clergyman, chaplain to Lord Stanhope; Mr. Kydd, a barrister of talents and fast rising character; the eminent and celebrated Mr. Horne Tooke, were among the numbers of the confined. The papers being examined, it was found that the two societies had concerted a project for assembling, by their joint influence, a national convention. This design, in combination with the many other proceedings of the societies, was construed by ministers to be a conspiracy against the constitution; and consequently (they inferred), a conspiracy against the king, amounting to high treason. His majesty sent messages to both houses, announcing the discoveries which had been made, and referring to their consideration the voluminous papers that had been seized. The ministers proposed a secret committee for the inspection of these documents. Mr. Fox reprobated the projected secrecy as unconstitutional and unnecessary, tending to promote that system of misery and delusion with which he had often charged the measures of administration. Whatever (he said) the criminality is, drag it openly to light: besides, by a resolution of the house, the seizure of papers has been declared to be illegal, unless treason be charged in the warrant, which authorizes such seizure. Ministers replied, that treason was charged in the warrant; that the seizure, therefore, was not illegal; that not only
prudent

Committees of both houses appointed to examine the papers. Report of the committees. Mr. Pitt states his view of the substance.

prudent policy directed, but the most imperious necessity dictated, secrecy in their inquisitorial proceedings, as the very existence of parliament and the constitution was at stake. On the 12th of March, at the instance of ministers, secret committees were nominated; and on the 16th the first report being read to the commons, Mr. Pitt stated at great length his view of its contents. He traced the history and proceedings of the societies for the last two years: they had adopted (he said) the monstrous doctrines of the Rights of Man, which seduced the weak and ignorant to overturn government, law, property, security, and whatever was valuable; which had destroyed whatever was valuable in France, and endangered the safety, if not the existence, of every nation in Europe. The object of all these societies was the practical inculcation of such doctrines. A correspondence prior to the enormities of France had subsisted between these societies and the French jacobin clubs. When the jacobin faction, which usurped the government, had commenced hostilities against Great Britain, these societies as far as they could, had pursued the same conduct, expressed the same attachment to their cause, adopted their appellations, and formed the design of disseminating the same principles. Their operations were chiefly directed to manufacturing towns. They considered the convention at Edinburgh as the representatives of the people, asserted the innocence of those members who fell under the sentence of the law, and declared they could only look for reform in such a convention. But the chief attention of the house was required in considering a society,

though

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though composed of the meanest and most despicable of the people, who acted upon the worst jacobin principles, and had within it the means of the most unbounded extension and rapid increase. This society, comprehending thirty divisions in London, was connected by a systematic correspondence with other societies scattered through the manufacturing towns. It had arrived at such a pitch of audacity as to declare its competence to watch over the progress of legislation; to investigate its principles; to prescribe limits for its actions, beyond which if it presumed to advance, an end was to be put to the existence of parliament itself. Recently this corresponding society had laid before the constitutional society a plan for assembling a convention for all England. The evident object of the proposed meeting, in Mr. Pitt's opinion, was to exercise legislative and judicial capacities, to overturn the established system of government, and wrest from the parliament the power which the constitution has lodged in their hands. This plan was to be speedily carried into execution, and a central spot * was chosen to facilitate the meeting of their delegates. An assembly had been held on the 14th of April, and resolutions were passed which arraigned every branch of the government; threatened the sovereign; insulted the house of peers, and accused the commons of insufficiency. Declarations were uttered, that if certain measures were pursued, whether with or without the consent of parliament, they should be rescinded; and that

* Sheffield.

the constitution was utterly destroyed*. The proofs of these allegations were their own records; and it farther appeared from the report, that arms had been actually procured and distributed by the societies; and that, so far from breaking up this jacobin army, they had shewn themselves immoveably bent on their pursuit, and displayed preparations of defiance and resistance to government. From all these facts Mr. Pitt inferred there was a very dangerous conspiracy, which it became them, by reasonable interference, to prevent from being carried into execution†. In times of apprehended rebellion it had been usual to enact a temporary suspension of the habeas corpus law: that act had been suspended when the constitution and liberty of the country were most guarded and respected; and such a suspension was more particularly called for at this crisis, when attempts were made to disseminate principles dangerous to that constitution for the preservation of which the law had been made: Mr. Pitt, therefore, proposed a bill, “empowering his majesty to secure and detain all persons suspected of designs against his crown and government.” Mr. Fox expressed his astonishment that the committee should solemnly call the attention of the house to facts so long notorious: the persons in question had for two years openly and publicly avowed the acts now asserted to amount to a treasonable plot. If this was a conspiracy, it was the most garrulous conspiracy

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Mr. Pitt proposes a bill for detaining suspected persons without allowing them the benefit of the habeas corpus. Mr. Fox's view of the alleged conspiracy.

* Report of the secret committee of the house of commons concerning the seditious societies.

† Parliamentary Debates, May 16th, 1794.

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that was ever recorded in history. Plots for overturning government had been published for two years in the daily newspapers; the real transactions reported by the committee were chiefly repetitions of stale advertisements. What was the real amount, taken apart from the comments of Mr. Pitt's eloquence? Societies had been constituted for the purposes of parliamentary reform; these had corresponded together; and they had corresponded with France when at peace with this country. To effect the purposes of parliamentary reform, a convention had been held in Edinburgh: all these facts were notorious and stale; a convention was proposed for the purposes of reform in England; and this was *the only new information*. The project was in itself contemptible and ridiculous, and could not really alarm the minister, or any man in his senses. The remainder was not statement of facts, but inferences either of the committee or minister; containing an imputation of intention to overturn government, without the slightest evidence that such intentions existed. No grounds were adduced that could possibly justify such a momentous intrenchment on the liberties of the subject as this bill proposed. The minister, Mr. Fox believed, was not really alarmed*; but it was necessary for his views to keep up or create some new cause of panic, to gain a continuation of power over the people†. Why had not the law officers of the crown

* Parliamentary Debates, 16th May, 1794.

† This opinion was still more poignantly asserted by Mr. Sheridan.

prosecuted the authors, of the writings or acts reported to the house, if they were so very mischievous? The bill underwent a very interesting discussion in both houses: its other supporters agreeing with Mr. Pitt, contended that the facts brought to light evinced the existence of a most dangerous conspiracy, requiring the proposed suspension in order farther to discover its extent, and to prevent its wider diffusion. The other opposers agreed with Mr. Fox that no conspiracy or project of rebellion existed, and that the bill was an unnecessary and destructive infringement of British liberty; but the design of Mr. Pitt prevailed, and the proposition of ministers was passed into a law. By persons who admitted criminalty in the facts charged, different opinions were entertained concerning the degree of guilt which, if proved, they would constitute. The Lord Chancellor Loughborough, and several other eminent lawyers, conceived that the allegations, if established, would amount to a conspiracy against the king and government, and must be considered as intending or compassing the king's death. No less eminent lawyers, and at their head Lord Thurlow, declared, that though proved, they would not amount to high treason; that the interpretation by which they should be denominated high treason, was totally inconsistent with the letter of our statutes, which precisely and accurately defined that crime; and with the spirit of our laws, which rejected circuitous construction. These thought that the allegations amounted to sedition, and that the persons who should be proved actively guilty would well deserve the punishment annexed to sedition by the

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The bill is
passed into a
law.

Ministers,
including
the chan-
cellor, deem
the crimes
charged to
be high
treason.

Lord Thurlow asserts,
that by the
law of Eng-
land they are
not treason.

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The accused
are sent to
the Tower.

laws of England. Government having adopted the chancellor's opinion, and resolved to prosecute the persons arrested for high treason, sent them to the Tower, there to be confined until evidence should be prepared for their trials.

Supplies.

These were the principal discussions and measures concerning subjects of internal tranquillity, whether retrospective or prospective, that engaged parliament during the present session. The other objects which chiefly occupied its deliberations were warlike preparations both for defence and attack : the investigation of belligerent measures and events, and schemes of finance.

Debate
on the
introduction
of Hessian
troops.

An expedition having been projected to re-animate and assist the insurgents of La Vendee, a body of Hessian troops was hired as part of the force destined for that service : they reached the coast of the Isle of Wight, and, to prevent sickness, were disembarked until preparations should be ready. No objection was made to the employment or destination of those troops ; nor was the propriety or necessity of landing them called in question ; but it was maintained in parliament, that whenever the introduction of foreign troops became necessary, ministers ought either to obtain the previous consent of parliament, or resort to a bill of indemnity. Without discussing the general question of prerogative, so as to form any precedent for future times, it was determined that the specific exigency justified the measure in the present case.

Bill for the
employment
of emigrants.

Among the military supplies proposed for the service of the current year, was a corps of emigrant volunteers. Mr. Pitt introduced a bill for that purpose

pose, to enable the emigrant subjects of France to enlist in his majesty's service on the continent of Europe, and to receive native officers. Such a corps must be (it was said by its supporters) of wonderful efficacy, especially if sent to assist the royalists of La Vendee. The great body of the French was inimical to the terrible system, and wanted nothing but the prospect of steady and effectual aid to animate and invigorate them against the convention. The present usurpation of France was incompatible with the existence of other governments; and till we could overthrow their system of politics, we must not hope for peace or security *. In this endeavour he thought it right to unite with us persons who had the same reasons with ourselves, and who called upon the British nation to give them arms. As the present proposition, combined with the reasoning by which it was supported, appeared to approach nearer to interference in the internal affairs of France than ministers had before professed to intend, it was very warmly promoted by Mr. Burke, who seemed at last to conceive hopes that Britain would resolve, and explicitly avow its resolution of carrying on war *for the restoration of monarchy*. Mr. Dundas, indeed, had not stated the restitution of kingly government as synonymous with the overthrow of the existing usurpation. Mr. Burke, however, conceived that the terrible system did not spring from the individual character of Robespierre, but from the revolution which over-

* See Mr. Dundas's speech on the bill for employing emigrants, when before the committee.

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turned the established orders, enabled and stimulated Robespierre's ambition to operate. The emigrant corps, he hoped, assisting the La Vendéans, if powerfully and comprehensively supported by this country, would pave the way for a counter-revolution. Messrs. Fox and Sheridan, with some others, opposed the bill: they alleged that it tended to render the war more ferocious, which must always be the consequence of arming citizen against citizen; raised a force that was totally inefficacious, and that would certainly be overpowered; employed the votaries of the old government against the new government; and thus, contrary to the professions of ministers, really interfered in the internal affairs of France. They farther represented the measure as inconsistent with humanity towards the emigrants themselves. The French government had declared that no quarter should be given to Frenchmen caught in arms against the republic. In its immediate operation it must encourage the most cruel retaliation and ferocious vengeance; in its ultimate result, from the immense force of the present government, it would expose the emigrants to the most dreadful butchery. On these grounds they opposed the bill; but their objections were over-ruled: it passed through both houses with very great majorities, and was enacted into a law.

Apprehensions of an invasion.

In the course of the session a message from the king announced the avowed intentions of the enemy to invade this kingdom. A great augmentation of the militia, and an addition of volunteer fencible corps were accordingly voted: a letter from the secretary of state to the lord lieutenants of counties, solicited

solicited voluntary subscriptions to levy troops. The solicitation was represented, by members of opposition, as an attempt to raise money without consent of parliament. It was contended by ministers, that voluntary contributions of the subject for the purpose of assisting levies, when they received the sanction of parliament were perfectly legal, and consonant to precedent and practice; and quoted the contributions and levies during the rebellion in 1745; in the beginning of the seven years war; and in the American war, after the capture of Burgoyne. The supplies for the present year were very great and expensive: eighty-five thousand seamen, and a hundred and seventy-five thousand landsmen were voted. Besides the usual ways and means, there was a loan of eleven millions: new taxes on British and foreign spirits, bricks and tiles, slate, crown and plate glass, met with little opposition: duties on paper and on attornies were represented as oppressive, but on the whole it was allowed, that the imposts of Mr. Pitt, affecting the rich or middling classes, displayed financial ability and discrimination. Various subsidies were voted to foreign princes, and justified on the ground of contributing to the great purposes of the war. But the most important of these was the subsidy to the king of Prussia. On the 20th of April his majesty sent to the house of commons a copy of a treaty concluded by him with the States General and the king of Prussia, for the purpose of more effectually carrying on the war. By the stipulations with Frederic William Britain had agreed to pay him £50,000. a month; £100,000. a month for forage; in all, for the re-

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Voluntary
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tions for
raising
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to the king
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maining nine months of the present year, thirteen hundred and fifty thousand pounds : the whole year would amount to £1,800,000., out of which the State General were to pay £400,000. Embarked (said Mr. Pitt) as we were in war so just and necessary, it was material for us to possess the aid of so powerful a force. The king of Prussia was certainly a principal in the war, but unable to carry it on without pecuniary assistance; and his force, for which we were engaged to pay, was to be employed for our advantage, and the conquests to be made in the name of the maritime states. The astonishing exertions of France rendered efforts on our part additionally necessary; and the object of the war being so important, it would be the most preposterous folly to slacken our exertions in order to spare expence*. Opposition reprobated this policy as the height of profusion, and contended, first, that from the efforts of the king of Prussia, no benefit could accrue to this country which would compensate the cost; secondly, that we had no security that when the money was contributed he would perform the engagements which he incurred. The king of Prussia had originally begun the war : this very beginning of his, whether through the French aggression or his own, had ultimately involved us in the contest. Now, the king of Prussia having engaged other powers in the quarrel, desired to withdraw himself, and must be bribed to persevere in a war, which, but for himself, would have never been begun †.

* Parliamentary Debates, 29th April, 1794.

† Parliamentary Debates, 29th April, 1794.

His conduct contained such a mixture of perfidy, fraud, and meanness, as was unparalleled in all modern political history. No man of the least prudence could repose any confidence in one by whom he had been deceived yet were the people of this country to pay to such a person one million three hundred and fifty thousand pounds, the return for which was to depend upon his own honour: let us not trust a prince whose good faith we had so much reason to doubt. But if the king of Prussia was to be considered merely as a hirer of troops, why were the soldiers which we paid to be commanded by himself? The direction of mercenaries should belong to the power which purchased their service. These arguments produced little effect: a great majority of the house conceiving the proposed subsidy to the king of Prussia to be conducive to the purposes of the war, the advantage and honour of this country, agreed to the motion which was proposed by ministers.

While the British government adopted such measures as it thought most likely to strengthen our means of carrying on the war, it also endeavoured to impair the resources of the enemy. As the public funds of Britain afforded the most unquestionable security to the proprietors of money: there very large sums belonging to French subjects were vested. Agreeably to their general principles of converting private property to the use of the revolutionary government, the French rulers had turned their attention to this subject. They had formed a resolution, directing the use of every possible expedient to ascertain the property of French subjects

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Bill to prevent sums vested in the British funds by French subjects, from being seized by the French rulers.

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subjects in foreign funds, in order that it might be delivered up to the state and become public property; and that when the transfer was made, it should be paid for in assignats estimated at par. Mr. Pitt discerned the object of this scheme, and proposed means to prevent its operation. The purpose, he saw, was, to supply the resources for carrying on the war by plundering individuals of their property deposited in foreign countries, as they had before grasped the property in their own country. A general principle of our laws (he observed) was, that the payment of any debt owing to an alien enemy may be suspended during the war; and the king, if he thought fit, might attach it as belonging to an alien enemy: to continue, however, the benefits of mercantile intercourse, which were for the advantage of individuals, without trenching on public safety, the milder practice of modern times long suffered the rigour of this law to relax. In the present case Mr. Pitt proposed to secure the individuals by withholding their property from the grasp of the revolutionary rulers; and thus, whilst private advantage was promoted, resources sought by the enemy would be arrested. For this purpose he proposed a bill to prevent the application to the use of the present government of France, of all monies and effects in the hands of his majesty's subjects, the property of individuals of that country; and for preserving such money and effects to the use of its owners. The bill, with very little opposition, passing into a law, answered the double purpose of securing their property to individuals, and detaining from the enemy means of carrying on the war.

Repeated

Repeated motions made in both houses for the restoration of peace, necessarily reiterated the arguments which were before adduced; and indeed, the purposes of the propositions on that subject appear to have been chiefly to procure from ministers some declaration, or at least admission, of the specific objects for which the war was continued*; at least to induce them expressly to disavow every intention of co-operation with the continental powers to dictate her internal government to France: they farther aimed at persuading the houses to disapprove the conduct of the allies, especially of Prussia. Besides these indirect attempts, a direct effort was made to expose as impolitic the principle, system, and series of our foreign treaties. Mr. Whitbread, on the 6th of March, proposed an address to his majesty, expressing the concern of the commons that the king had entered into engagements totally incompatible with the avowed purposes of the present war; that he had made a common cause with powers, whose objects, though undefined, really appeared to be the restitution of monarchy; and earnestly praying his majesty, as far as was consistent with the national faith, to extricate himself from such engagements as might impede the conclusion of a separate peace. Next to the subsidiary treaty with the king of Prussia, a treaty with the king of Sardinia, by which we engaged to continue the war till Savoy was restored, incurred the strongest and most explicit censure. Britain had stipulated a subsidy of two hundred

Treaty with
the king of
Sardinia.

* See Resolutions moved by the Duke of Bedford and Mr. Fox, May 30th.

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thousand pounds a-year, to assist the king of Sardinia in his efforts to defend his own dominions. Mr. Whitbread and others maintained, that the advantage which Britain could derive from such exertions was by no means adequate to the expence to be incurred ; and that *the integrity of the king of Sardinia's dominions* was not, in the smallest degree, NECESSARY TO THE SECURITY OF BRITAIN; for which, according to ministers, we were engaged in the contest. Ministers endeavoured to prove that the whole system and series of treaties, subsidiary as well as others, were means necessary to promote the grand ends of the war. The address was negatived by the usual very great majority ; and a similar motion on the same subject experienced in the house of lords the same fate.

Proposition
of an en-
quiry into
the conduct
and success
of the last
campaign.

Having in vain endeavoured to procure the termination of the war, and the dissolution of alliances deemed by government, and the majority in parliament, essentially conducive to its purposes, opposition proposed to enquire how far, in the late campaign, its objects had been attained, and what the probability of success was from perseverance in the contest. Major Maitland, after a detailed review of the measures and events of the last campaign, and an estimate of the result, contended that the attainments of the French had been greater than their losses. They had been forced to evacuate Belgium, but they had suppressed the revolt of La Vendee, a much more important event; since all their dangers arose from internal disturbance. The strength of the allies had been declining ever since the siege of Valenciennes. The empress of Russia made protestations,

testations, but took no active share in hostilities; and the king of Prussia was manifestly meditating a secession. The military plans latterly adopted by the allies deserved severe animadversion. While their armies were united, their efforts had been crowned with success: the separation of the forces he imputed to the influence of the British cabinet, as Britain alone was to be benefited by the capture of Dunkirk. If the attempt upon that fortress by a detached force was expedient, the sole hope of success must arise from promptitude of execution, and the completeness of preparations; but neither of these attended the attack upon Dunkirk: four weeks elapsed from the taking of Valenciennes before the siege of Dunkirk was undertaken. Neither artillery nor gun-boats were ready in proper time for covering the operation. To the master-general of the ordnance, and to ministry, the failure of that enterprize must be attributed. The evacuation of Toulon was still more severely reprobated: why were not other troops sent to preserve the conquest of Toulon? or why, when it was found untenable, was not an evacuation at once determined upon, and the fleet brought away to save the unhappy inhabitants from the fury of those whom they had mortally offended? On these grounds Major Maitland “ moved a committee to enquire into the causes which led to the failure of the army under the Duke of York at Dunkirk; and to enquire into the causes which led to the evacuation of Toulon under General Dundas and Lord Hood.” It was replied, that Dunkirk would have been to Britain a very important acquisition; that it had every pro-

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bable appearance of practicability ; that the attempt was therefore wise : that its failure arose from the enormous efforts of the French, which could not have been foreseen or expected. From the same cause proceeded the evacuation of Toulon : those who censured us for leaving that place ought to recollect, that we had there given such an effectual blow to the French navy, that ages would elapse before they would be able to recover their losses as a maritime power. On a general review of the events of the campaign, great glory was due to the British councils and arms. These arguments appearing to the majority valid, the proposed motion was negatived. About the same time a proposition was offered to the house of commons respecting sinecure places and pensions. Since a war was deemed necessary that called for all our resources, it was prudent and expedient to retrench every unnecessary expence : for this reason Mr. Harrison proposed a bill to apply certain parts of salaries and pensions to the use of the public during the continuance of the war ; and also to appropriate part of the emoluments of efficient places, so that they should not amount to more than a specific sum. This motion was severely reprobated by Mr. Burke, as similar to the proceedings which had occasioned the ruin of France. It was the peculiar province of the crown to measure and distribute the portion of rewards according to the merits of its servants ; and he was astonished the house should be called upon to interfere in a matter not within the scope of their ordinary functions. Mr. Sheridan attacked this doctrine as totally unconstitutional : did the crown possess

possess the sole right of judging what rewards were to be bestowed upon the public servants? If it did, he would ask who was obliged to pay those rewards? The money belonged to the public: the commons were the servants of the people; and as the people contributed, they had a right to expect and demand that the contributions should be applied for their good. Entering into a detail upon this general principle, he gave a particular account of the emoluments enjoyed by certain individuals, which he appeared to think far surpassing their services; and that it was but fair they should contribute part of the surplus towards the public exigencies caused by a war which they warmly supported. The opposite party replied, that the pension list and sinecure places, during the administration of Mr. Pitt, had been very greatly reduced; besides that it would be extremely unjust to subject one body of men to an exclusive tax: On these grounds Mr. Harrison's motion was rejected.

Mr. Dundas, as president of the board of controul, presented his annual statement of the finances of India; the result of which was, that notwithstanding the late war with Tippoo, and the stagnation of commerce at home until measures were adopted for the support of mercantile credit, the affairs of the company were in a prosperous situation; and he augured great and rapid increase of their prosperity.

The slave-trade was this session again resumed by Mr. Wilberforce; whose efforts, however, for the present were limited to one branch of that traffic. He proposed to abolish that part of the trade which supplied

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supplied foreign territories with slaves. The supporters of the slave-trade rested their cause on the ground of its being necessary to the well-being of our West Indian possessions, which could not otherwise be supplied with labourers. They who were sincere in this objection to the abolition must warmly defend the present motion; for, instead of abridging that supply it tended to increase it, and to prevent us from raising the colonies of foreigners into a competition with our own. A bill for the purpose being introduced by Mr. Wilberforce, passed the commons, but was rejected by the peers.

The session
closes.

These were the chief subjects which occupied the attention of the house during this very important session, which was closed by a speech from the throne on the 11th of July.

Internal
proceedings
of France.Jacobin
faction and
Robespierre
paramount.

Before the narrative proceeds to the campaign of 1794, it is necessary to take a short view of the internal affairs of France, which had a powerful influence on military transactions. We left the jacobin faction triumphant by the downfall of the Girondines; Robespierre paramount by his command over the populace; the system of terror completely established, and producing the most direful effects within the country, but the most gigantic efforts against the enemies of its revolutionary system. The government of France was now become a government of blood, to be sustained by the terrors of the guillotine. This fell engine was employed to remove the obnoxious, to crush the suspected, and to destroy the unsuccessful. Misfortune, though totally blameless, was consummated on the scaffold; thence Custine, a general of great ability and enter-
prize,

prize, was recalled from the Northern army after the surrender of Valenciennes, and instantly committed to the prison of the Abbey. He was accused before the revolutionary tribunal of having maintained a traitorous correspondence with the Prussians while he commanded on the Rhine; and of having neglected various opportunities of throwing reinforcements into Valenciennes. No evidence was adduced to prove the allegations; but proof was not necessary to sanguinary despotism: he speedily suffered death.

The execution of Custine was soon followed by the trial of the unfortunate queen. This awful instance of the instability of human grandeur, after the murder of her ill-fated husband, had been separated from her family in the Temple. On the 1st of August 1793, she was suddenly, and in the most cruel and insulting manner, removed to the Conciergerie, a prison destined for the reception of the vilest malefactors. In the midst of a nation recently so distinguished for loyalty, every effort of invention was employed in the most wanton and barbarous insults to the consort of their lately adored sovereign. In a metropolis, within a few years the centre of refinement, and devoted attention to the sex, the most brutal and savage ingenuity was exerted in oppression, insolence, and tyranny, to a poor, helpless, and forlorn woman. The cell in which she was immured was only eight feet square; her bed was an hard mattress of straw, and her food of the meanest kind; while she was never suffered to enjoy the privilege of being alone, two soldiers being appointed to watch her night and day,

Situation of
the queen.

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trial and
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tion.

without the intermission of a moment *. Confined in this loathsome dungeon, in such circumstances of aggravated brutality, on the 15th of October, she was brought before the revolutionary tribunal. The charges adduced against her were, that she had contributed to the derangement of the national finances, by remitting, from time to time, considerable sums to her brother the emperor Joseph : since the revolution continued to hold a criminal correspondence with foreign powers : attempted a counter-revolution, particularly by applying to the officers at Versailles in October 1789 ; and at the same time, through the agency of certain monopolists, had created an artificial famine. According to her accusers she was the principal agent and promoter of the flight of the royal family in June 1791 : induced the king to refuse his sanction to the decrees concerning the emigrants and refractory priests : in conjunction with a scandalous faction (the Girond), persuaded the king and the assembly to declare war against Austria, contrary to every principle of sound policy and the public welfare : war being commenced, she had conveyed intelligence to the enemy, and was the cause of the massacre of the 10th of August. To these allegations, some of which were totally indifferent, whether true or false, and the rest supported by no proof, one was added for a consummation to the rest, as physically incredible, as morally infamous : it was affirmed by these brutes, in conception as well as in conduct, that

* See Otridge's Annual Register, 1793, p. 276.

she had an incestuous commerce with her own son, a child of eight years old *. The queen considered accusation by blood-thirsty despots as synonymous with condemnation: though she disregarded such accusers, yet out of justice to herself, her origin, her family, and her fame, she exerted her abilities in rebutting charges so horrid and flagitious. With the dignity of an elevated mind, attacked by the scorn and iniquity of the unworthy, she answered serenely and calmly to all their asseverations. Retaining, in this dreadful situation, that full possession of faculties which magnanimity secures to unmerited suffering, she, though totally ignorant of the allegations that were to be made, demonstrated their futility, and confuted the assertions of her enemies. Respecting the charge of incest, she appealed to those who were themselves mothers for the possibility of the crime. Though her defence completely overturned the evidence for the prosecution, it was, as she well knew it would be, totally unavailing: she was pronounced guilty of all the charges, and doomed to die the following day.

The queen heard with resignation a sentence which announced her speedy release from a situation of such accumulated misery. She had one consolation to which the diabolical malignity of her murderers could not reach: she was a CHRISTIAN: she believed in a future state; and therein she looked for happiness which no revolutionary tribunal could disturb, no atheistical assassins could destroy. Before she was reconducted to her dungeon, it was four in

* Ottridge's Annual Register, 1793, p. 276.

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the morning ; and twelve the ensuing day was the hour fixed for her decapitation. She was not allowed a clergyman of her own choice, but provided with a constitutional priest. At half past eleven the queen was brought out of prison, and, like the lowest malefactor, was conducted in a common cart to the place of execution. Her hair was entirely cut off from the back of her head, which was covered with a small white cap ; she wore a white undress ; her hands were tied behind her ; and she sat with her back to the horses. They who had seen her in the zenith of magnificence and splendor, could not but contrast her former with her present condition : those who had admired her exquisite beauty, could not but observe the premature depredations of sorrow on a face so fair : but if the changes impaired the gloss of her juvenile charms, they, together with their causes, to feeling spectators (and all Frenchmen were not brutes) rendered her faded countenance more interesting and impressive. She calmly conversed with her priest, exhibiting neither ostentatious indifference nor overwhelming anguish, but resigned submission. Casting her eyes to the Thuilleries, one scene of her former greatness, which called up so many tender associations and melancholy ideas, she indicated a sorrowful emotion ; but repelling this last intrusion of wordly recollection, she turned to the instrument of death. At half past twelve the guillotine severed her head from her body ; which the executioner exhibited, all streaming with blood, from the four corners of the scaffold, to an inveterate and insatiable multitude. The body of the murdered

Execution.

murdered queen was immediately conveyed to a grave filled with quick-lime, in the church-yard called De la Madelaine, where the remains of Louis XVI. had been interred with the same privation of pious regard or decent ceremonial.

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The murder of the queen was soon followed by the death of the accused deputies. The trial of these persons was deferred from time to time, till the complete overthrow of their adherents should give security to their prosecutors. They were charged with having conspired against the unity and indivisibility of the republic, by exciting a rebellion in the departments of the South, and in Calvados. One article of the charges respecting foreign politics was, they were accused of having caused war to be declared, first against Austria, and afterwards against England and Holland. Thus arraigned, at the instance of the ruling party, they were all doomed to death: many others experienced a similar destiny, either undeservedly or illegally. The detestable and contemptible Orleans suffered the same fate which, at his instigation, had overwhelmed so many others. A decree had been passed under the present rulers for removing the Bourbon family to Marseilles; and Orleans, who had latterly assumed the silly and fantastical name of Philip Egalite, was included in its operation. From Marseilles he was brought to Paris, on a charge of having aspired at the sovereignty from the commencement of the revolution. As this was an accusation which could scarcely admit of any evi-

Brissot and the other Girond prisoners are put to death,

Orleans shares the same fate.

* See Otridge's Annual Register 1793, p. 278.

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dence but conjectural, it was not substantiated so far as to justify the sentence of death to which he was doomed. Orleans experienced in his own person the tyrannic cruelty of the revolutionary system which he had been so ardent to promote ; and however deserving he might be of capital punishment, he, according to the most probable accounts, suffered *illegally*. Profligate and despicable as the character of this man had been, his sentence excited neither horror nor commiseration in any party : the last period of his life, however, appeared to indicate sentiments less disgraceful than those which had manifested themselves in the invariable tenour of his former conduct. On the 6th of November he was conveyed to the place of his execution, amidst the insults and reproaches of the populace ; and met death with a magnanimity less befitting the associate and tool of Robespierre and Marat than the descendant of Henry. Two days after the ignominious catastrophe of Orleans, the lovely and accomplished Madame Roland was brought to the scaffold. To the distinguished talents, varied and extensive knowledge of this celebrated lady, her domestic virtues were not inferior. Her husband, hated by Robespierre on account of his attachment to the Girond party, was included in the proscription that followed the decree of the 3d of May : he accordingly quitted Paris, but his wife was apprehended and committed to prison. She was at length brought to trial, and the empty charge of a conspiracy was followed by a sentence of death. At the place of execution she maintained that firm undaunted spirit which had hitherto supported her ;

and,

and bowing down before the statue of liberty, she exclaimed, "O liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name."

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To take away property, liberty, and life, to inflict anguish and torment; to produce to human beings physical evil, did not satiate the inventive malignity of this extraordinary tyranny. Robespierre and his band, more comprehensive and more thoroughly diabolical, ardently, studiously, and systematically sought the increase of moral depravation. Projects for disseminating misery could not, they well knew, be so completely successful as by establishing the domination of sin. Sin could never attain so extensive an empire as by the total subjugation of religion; therefore to annihilate piety, with all its external forms and assistances, was one great object of Robespierre's devices. To effect this purpose, one means was to destroy the reverence for all the institutions which are deduced from the scriptures, and tend so powerfully to cherish sentiments of religion. Of these, none had been found more effectual than the exclusive devotion of one day in the week to the social worship of God; and the appointment of certain stated periods for specific commemorations. The calendar in all christian countries, taking its first origin from the birth of our saviour, and enumerating the years by an event the most momentous to the christian world, had regulated the divisions of the year by epochs in the history of our saviour's mission upon earth, or some other seasons connected with scripture narratives; and had intermingled religious associations with the several progressions of the seasons. Of these, the

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state of
France under
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observance of the sabbath recurring most frequently is the most extensively beneficial. The government of Robespierre projected the abolition of these institutions, and actually effected a new calendar which destroyed all reference to christian history and precepts, commenced the æra from the downfall of monarchy, annihilated all terms connected with christian history and establishments, abolished the sabbath; and instead of the seventh day, enjoined by the commandment of God to be kept holy, they appointed the tenth as a period of mere civil respite, to the total exclusion of all religious exercise. Having thus renounced christianity, their new calendar partly adopted the phraseology and arrangement of pagans, denominated every space of four years an olympiad, in imitation of the Greeks, and the extraordinary day of every fourth year an intercalary, in imitation of the Romans*. This innovation therefore, under the government of Robespierre and his agents, tended strongly to promote that impiety which the tribunitian government was so eager to establish. Robespierre and his junto had often declared their disbelief of the christian religion, and even denied the existence of a supreme being; but they had not yet produced a formal and public renunciation of the God and favour of the world. An act so horrible remained for the legislature of a

* They divided the year into twelve months consisting each of thirty days, and distinguished by names expressive of their usual produce, temperature, or appearance; while to complete the year, five supplementary days are added, and denominated *fans culotides*.

most enlightened nation, near the close of the eighteenth century. On the 7th of November, in the phrenzy of impiety, the republican bishop of Paris, and his grand vicars, entered the hall of the convention along with the constituted authorities, abjured the name of Christ, renounced the office of christian priests, their appointments as christian pastors, and their characters as christian men. Now they would own no temple but the sanctuary of the law, no divinity but liberty, no object of worship but their country, no gospel but the constitution. This abjuration was received by the convention with the most rapturous applause. A number of allegorical deities, liberty, equality, indivisibility, and many others, were consecrated as objects of worship. To promote this system of paganism, agents were dispatched to all the departments, to complete the change. In many parts the abjuration of religion, through the efforts of the clergy, was very warmly received, while its various commentators added to the impiety, according to the measure of their invention. One of the most zealous votaries of impiety, was the republican bishop of Moulins. Trampling on the cross and the mitre, he assumed the pike and cap of liberty, and preached the doctrine big with horror to reflecting men, but full of encouragement to diabolic natures, "that death is an eternal sleep." A common prostitute was placed on the altar of the cathedral church of Paris, to receive adoration, as a substitute for Jesus Christ. The convention combined intolerance with atheism and blasphemy, and passed a decree, ordering the churches to be shut. Many of the priests who still attempted

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The revolutionary
bishops
abjure the
name of
Christ,

and a future
state.

The
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are shut.

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Fall of
Danton.

attempted to officiate at their altars according to the rites of christianity, were thrown into dungeons. Renunciation of religion, as its abettors foresaw, promoted the most enormous crimes. The populace, who in consequence of these proceedings reckoned themselves authorized to plunder every place of worship, public and private, divided with the convention large heaps of shrines, figures, and vessels, hitherto used in the offices of religion, while commissioners from the convention aided the sacrilegious pillage. The revolutionary phrenzy had not totally overwhelmed every principle and sentiment of natural and revealed religion. The decree for shutting up the churches was received with so general horror and detestation, that the government found it necessary immediately to reverse it, and again to admit religious worship. Robespierre, though most active in enmity to religion, yet eagerly desirous to preserve and increase his popularity, promoted the restoration of divine service. By the influence which he established among the populace, he was able to acquire an ascendancy over his associates. Of these, one of the ablest was Danton : this revolutionist, much superior to Robespierre in the talents and accomplishments which would have commanded attention in the Roman or British senate, did not equal him in the arts which conciliate an ignorant rabble. Conscious of his own powers, he intended Robespierre for a tool ; and was active in overturning the Brissotines, in order to elevate himself ; but at length fell like many of his revolutionary predecessors, by the instruments of his exaltation. So contrary to the interest of an able man

man it is to aggrandize a rabble that would level all distinctions. The Parisian populace loved and revered Robespierre, because in manners, appearance, and passions, he was one of themselves. His ruling affection was envy*, a desire of reducing all others to the level of his own meanness. This sentiment, together with fear, the natural passion of a despot without high talents and greatness of mind, chiefly prompted all the enormities of this monster. He both hated and feared † the aristocracy of genius, as a superiority over himself, and the means of effecting his downfall. But his tyranny, dreadful as it was to France, by its very terrors produced most gigantic efforts against its enemies.

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The Parisian populace adore Robespierre. His real talents and character.

* See Adolphus's Memoirs of Robespierre.

† Domitian was the most timid of men; the fearlessness of Julius Cæsar, on the contrary, hastened his assassination.

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Jealousy among the allies.—The Emperor tries to raise his subjects in mass—is opposed by the King of Prussia.—Plan of the campaign.—Respective force of the belligerent powers.—The Emperor joins the allied armies.—Energy of the revolutionary leaders in France.—Rebellion is quelled in La Vendee.—The confederates take the field.—Siege of Landreci.—Conflicts between the allies and the republicans.—Battle of the 24th of April, between the duke of York and the republicans.—Our prince and countrymen are victorious.—Landreci is taken.—Testimony of the convention to the heroism of the English.—Pichegru—his new plan of warfare—well suited to the state of his army.—System of incessant attack.—Co-operating line of French armies from the German Rhine to the sea.—The French wisely avoid a close engagement with the British.—Separation of the Confederates. Jourdain advances with an army in mass.—The Prince of Cobourg attempts to oppose him without the assistance of the Duke of York—receives a signal defeat at Fleurus, which decides the fate of the campaign.—Pichegru in West Flanders attacks and defeats Clairfait.—Dangerous situation of the Duke of York—who retires to Antwerp.—Earl Moira is ordered to Flanders with his army.—The Prince of Wales offers to act under him as a volunteer—it is not deemed expedient to risk the person of the heir apparent.—His lordship lands at Ostend—finds the place surrounded by enemies—determines to force his way to the Duke of York—masterly execution and success of his design.—Advances of the French. The Austrians entirely evacuate the Netherlands.—Intrepid stand of the British at Breda.—The Duke of York and the Prince of Orange are obliged to fall back—they retreat behind the Meuse.—Victories of the Republicans on the Rhine.—The German troops cross the Rhine.—Address of the Emperor to the German princes—is totally unavailing.

Faithlessness

Faithlessness of the King of Prussia.—Opinions on the operations and events of this campaign.—Suspensions unfavourable to the Prince of Cobourg—are not supported by proof.—Cobourg a man of very moderate abilities.—Victories of the republicans over the gallant Clairfait.—The republicans reduce the whole left bank of the Rhine.—The British gain some advantages.—Winter campaign in Holland.—Sickness and mortality of the British troops,—intrepid efforts of the exhausted remains.—Immense superiority of numbers obliges our reduced army to evacuate Holland—which yields to the French arms.—Campaign of 1794 peculiarly disastrous to the British army.—Strictures of military critics on the plan of operations.—Strictures of political critics on the executive councils of Britain.—Efforts of France beyond all evidence of experience or probable conjecture—the event therefore does not necessarily afford grounds of either military or political censure.—Signal successes of Britain when she fought alone—her fleets paramount in the Mediterranean—reduce Corsica, and protect Spain and Italy—in the West Indies she subdues Martinico, Guadaloupe, St. Lucie, and part of St. Domingo.—Operations of Earl Howe and the Channel fleet—skillful manœuvre to bring the enemy to battle—battle of the first of June—numbers, force, and courageous efforts of the enemy—unavailing against the British fleet—decisive, glorious, and momentous victory.

THERE was a great and evident want of concert among the German powers engaged in the combination against France. The Duke of Brunswick was disgusted with the conduct of General Wurmser in abandoning the lines of Wiefsembourg without risking a battle, whence his serene highness had been compelled to raise the siege of Landau. He had written a letter to the King of Prussia, complaining of the want of concert, and extending

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tending his animadversions to the two campaigns. On the other hand the Emperor, though he was far from blaming the Duke of Brunswick individually, was by no means satisfied with the co-operation of the Prussian king. The truth appears to be that the jealousy which for half a century had subsisted between the houses of Brandenburg and Austria, and which at the commencement of the war seemed absorbed in enmity to the French revolutionists, was still alive, and strongly operating*. The King of Prussia considered the continental efforts of the last campaign as aggrandizing Austria, without producing any benefit to him which could indemnify his own exertions, or balance the accession to his ancient and nearest rival. He did not regard the operations on the frontiers of France as necessary to the safety of the empire and security of his own dominions, and therefore conceived himself not fighting his own battles. If it was wise at all to combine against France, the expediency of such a confederacy must have arisen from some common object, which it imported the several members of the alliance to pursue; and if it was to be pursued, vigorous measures with concert of operations only could be efficient. If the King of Prussia apprehended imminent danger from the progress of French principles, or of French power, in sound policy he ought to have made the repression of these his supreme object; and to have restrained for the present his jealousy of the house of Austria. If he did not apprehend danger from France, prudence required he should withdraw from the confederacy; honour and sincerity demanded that he

* Segur, vol. iii. chap. 13.

should

should not pretend to be an offensive member of the alliance, if he was resolved to be inactive in its service, and indifferent about its success. On the other hand, the same unity of object was the real interest of the Emperor, if it was his interest at all to be member of a combination against France. The separate appropriation of fortresses could not indemnify him for his belligerent exertions, must disgust his continental ally, and ultimately contravene the advancement of their common object. In the beginning of this year the Emperor, extremely anxious to oppose fresh numbers of Germans to the republican host, actively endeavoured to induce the Germanic states to arm in mass. This mode the King of Prussia declared he would never sanction, and would withdraw his troops if it were attempted. He however professed himself still an active member of the confederacy, and ready to support every prudent and practicable project for forwarding its ends. The emperor found it necessary to acquiesce in Frederic William's objections to a levy in mass, and to appear satisfied with his professions of zeal in the cause. The subsidiary treaty with England either empowered him to make vigorous efforts or induced him to promise such, and accordingly he was still deemed one of the chief members of the confederacy, and upon the conviction of his co-operation the projects and plans of the campaign were formed. The confederates proposed this year to press upon the frontiers of France with numerous forces on various sides, and also to co-operate with the insurgents on the coast of Brittany. In the

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The Emperor tries to raise his subjects in mass.

is opposed by the King of Prussia.

Plan of the campaign.

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Respective
forces of the
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the month of February the Duke of York, and with him Colonel Mack, came over from the continent to London to hold a conference with the British ministers on the operations of the campaign. The emperor undertook to furnish two hundred thousand men, the King of Prussia sixty-four, including thirty-two thousand in British pay, Britain forty thousand, the rest of the allies, the Dutch, German princes, and the Emigrants fifty-two thousand, so that the whole combined force to operate on the frontiers of France should amount to three hundred and fifty-six thousand men, besides the troops intended to be employed by Britain on the coast. The French army it appears at this time amounted to seven hundred and eighty thousand men, of whom four hundred and eighty thousand composed the armies on the frontiers, and the rest were employed either in watching the late scenes of insurrection, or on the frontiers of Spain and the Alps.

On the fifth of March the Duke of York arrived on the continent, to take the command of the British army; on the seventeenth he proceeded with General Clairfait to Valenciennes, where a council of war was held with the Prince of Saxe Cobourg, after which the generals returned to their respective head-quarters. It was determined that the emperor himself should take the field, and should be invested with the supreme command.

The Emperor
joins the
allied ar-
mies.

On the ninth of April his Imperial Majesty arrived at Brussels, and was inaugurated Duke of Brabant. This ceremony, performed with great
pomp

pomp and splendour, it was presumed would strike the imaginations and hearts of the people, and stimulate them to the most vigorous efforts in his and their own cause. The states in a body presented his Imperial Majesty with the keys of the Louvain; on the gate there was the following inscription: "*Cæsar adest, tremant Galli*;" this sentence was by the courtiers construed to mean the French republicans tremble at the approach of the Emperor Francis. Great numbers of children, decorated with white staves, drew the state coach solemnly along; at the principal church *Te Deum* was chaunted; verses were presented to the Emperor, congratulating his inauguration, and celebrating the achievements which he was to perform. His Imperial Majesty proceeding to Valenciennes, was joyfully received by the allied army; and on the 16th of April he reviewed the combined forces, previously to the commencement of military operations.

Meanwhile the French government had made the most powerful and efficient dispositions for opening the campaign. Horrible as the decemviral system was, it possessed one quality so momentous in war, that without it all other qualities supported by the most abundant resources are of little efficacy; it was distinguished for extraordinary ENERGY. Every latent power was called into action, its immense resources were not only employed, but converged into a focus. The immediate object was to repel foreign invasions and interference wheresoever they threatened, and wheresoever they were seconded; to concentrate all the intellectual and physical force of France to this point; to crumble all

Energy of
the revolu-
tionary
leaders in
France.

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Rebellion
is quelled
in La Ven-
de.

opposition to this design and to the existing rulers who were carrying it into execution. Some embers of rebellion rekindling early in spring, troops were sent with the usual rapidity to the scene of reviving insurrection. These speedily subjugated the royalists, and punished them in the most summary and cruel manner. Rebellion was crushed by the dispersion of the Vendéans; faction was extinguished; and hostile operations against foreign powers engrossed the sole attention. General Jourdain was removed from the command of the northern army, and succeeded by General Pichegru, whose uncommon military talents proved him deserving of this confidence. As Jourdain was permitted to retire without disgrace, and indeed, in the express words of the decree, with honour to himself and with the gratitude of his country, his retirement was but short, and he was afterwards appointed to command the army of the Rhine.

The confederates
take the
field.
Siege of
Landreci.

On the seventeenth of April the confederates advanced in eight columns to invest Landreci, a well fortified town in Hainault, on the right bank of the river Sambre. The first column, composed of Austrian and Dutch troops under Prince Christian of Hesse Darmstadt, advanced upon the village of Catillon, which was forced after some resistance. The second under Lieutenant General Alvinczy, forced the French entrenchments at Mazinguer, Oisy, and Nouviou, and took possession of the whole forest of Nouviou. The third column, led on by the Emperor in person and the Prince of Cobourg, after carrying the villages of Ribouville and Wassigny, detached forwards the advanced guards, which

which took possession of the heights called Grand and Petit Blocus. The fourth and fifth columns were entrusted to the Duke of York; the first of these was under his own immediate direction; and the latter was commanded by Sir William Erskine. The objects of these columns were the redoubts and village of Vaux, and the strong entrenchments of the French in the wood called Bois de Bouchain. The sixth, seventh, and eighth columns, under the hereditary Prince of Orange, were not engaged, being only a corps of observation on the side of Cambray*. The Duke of York endeavoured, notwithstanding the strong position of the French army, to turn their right, and for that purpose ordered the whole column to move forwards under the cover of the high ground, leaving only sufficient cavalry to occupy their attention. The fire of the republicans was at first severe, but finding the British troops eager to press them to a close engagement, which they foresaw would terminate in their discomfiture, they thought it expedient to retreat. These successes of the British troops enabled the confederates to commence the siege. The French assembled in considerable force at the camp of Cæsar, near Cambray, which, as we have seen, they had occupied the former year. The Duke of York, well knowing the efficacy of the British force, on the 23d of April sent General Otto to attack the enemy's position. Otto, finding the French strong, and firmly posted, delayed the assault till the arrival of a reinforcement, when, charging them with

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Conflicts
between the
allies and
the republi-
cans.

* See New Annual Register for 1794, p. 328.

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Battle of
the 24th
of April
between
the Duke
of York and
the republicans;our prince
and countrymen are
victorious.

impetuosity, he soon broke their line, and after killing twelve hundred drove the rest into Cambray, with the loss of their artillery *. Pichegru, not disheartened by these repeated disadvantages, still directed his own movements against the most formidable part of his enemies. On the 24th of April he attacked the Duke of York on all sides. The consummate general of the republicans found in the British prince and his army a commander and soldiers not to be overcome even by his ability and efforts. Frederic vigorously receiving the assailants in front by grape shot and musketry, judiciously dispatched several regiments of cavalry round the right, and of infantry round the left wing of his enemy, while he himself opposed the powerful and numerous host in the front of the battle; the two detachments charging the enemy's flanks, broke their lines, and produced a most destructive carnage in both wings: such a combination of valour and skill completely defeated the French. This attempt of Pichegru was only part of a general plan of attack, extending from Treves to the sea, although he chose for himself the post of most difficulty and danger. On the right, the columns of the French attacking the enemy's army were repulsed with loss, though not nearly so great as the loss which they incurred in their conflict with the Duke of York. On the left, they gained a trifling advantage by the reduction of Menin and Courtray. Other engagements took place during the siege, without any decisive event. Where the British fought the

* See Macfarlane's history, vol. iv. p. 469.

French were uniformly repulsed; but in their other conflicts they were more successful. Their efforts, however, to relieve Landreci, were not effectual, as that fortress was captured after an investment of ten days. The French rulers acknowledged in the convention, that though not the most numerous, the most formidable opponents to Gallic valour were the English*.

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Landreci is taken.
Testimony of the convention to the heroism of the English.

Pichegru, a man of strong and comprehensive genius, regarded precedented modes of warfare no farther than they could serve his purpose; and formed a plan of attack at once new and admirably adapted to the character of the French, especially to the soldiers under his command. His system of tactics consisted in pursuing the enemy without intermission; courting opportunities of engagements; and keeping his whole force together, without dividing it for the purpose of carrying on sieges; to reduce only such as were necessary in order to secure proper positions, without seeming to be at all concerned about the reduction of such strong places as he had left behind. This system was suitable to the state of military experience among the greater part of the French soldiers, as well as to the character of the people. The troops were mostly new levied, and although nationally courageous, active, and impetuous, and then inspired by enthusiasm, yet they were not sufficiently trained in stationary warfare to undertake any siege of difficulty. Be-

Pichegru.

His new plan of warfare.

* See Barrere's speech in the convention, after the late victory of the Duke of York.

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System of
incessant
attack.

Co-operat-
ing line of
French
armies from
the German
Rhine to
the sea.

The French
wisely avoid
a close
engage-
ment with
the British.

sides, as an annalist * of the present campaign observes, "the French soldier is too ardent and impatient to go through with a chain of operations that require perseverance. In the field he darts forth as an eagle, and fights like a lion. But a long and arduous siege repels, and often even discourages. In order to have a military body of men perfect and invincible, it would be necessary to carry on sieges with Swiss troops, and to have French armies of observation. But while a general has only Frenchmen under his command, he ought not to let them grow restive, by remaining long in one place, but keep them always in breath, and always within view of the enemy." This system of incessant attack was extended in its operation to the several armies of the republicans, so as to render them really parts of one great host, closely connected together, as one army over a wide expanse of country. From the German Rhine to the sea, there was one co-operating line of armies. Though the victory of the duke of York, and the capture of Landreci retarded the progress of this grand scheme of advance and assault they did not prevent its final execution and success. The exertions and attainments of the British arms eventually promoted the accomplishment of the French projects. After the battle of the 24th of April, they cautiously abstained from close engagement with the British forces, and

* Histoire Chronologique des operations de l'Armée du Nord, et de celle du Sambre et Meuse, par le citoyen David, témoin des plupart de leurs exploits.

bent their principal efforts, both on the right and left, against the Austrians.

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To this plan of partial attack the movements of the allied army were peculiarly auspicious. Soon after the siege of Landreci it was judged expedient to divide the confederates into three parts; the chief army under the immediate command of the prince of Cobourg, and having the emperor himself at its head, was posted near the Sambre; the duke of York with the British forces, was stationed at Tournay; and general Clairfait, with a third army, occupied West Flanders. Pichegru directed his own principal efforts to the left against Clairfait, and straitening the quarters of the duke of York; and in attacking British posts and detachments, without hazarding a decisive battle. Several very bloody conflicts, however, took place in this kind of warfare, but without materially impairing his highness's force, though fresh numbers were daily joining the French army. Jourdain with the army of the Rhine, in the beginning of the campaign, had met with severe checks, but had been ultimately successful against general Beaulieu, whom he compelled to evacuate the duchy of Luxemburg, and to fall back to Namur. Encouraged by their career of success, the French now prepared to invest Charle-roi on the Sambre. The prince of Cobourg with the main army advanced to its relief; but though the undertaking was extremely important, trusted to his own troops, without calling for the aid of the duke of York from Tournay. On the 21st of June he reached Ath, and on the 24th he effected a junction

Separation
of the
confederates.

Jourdain
advances
with an
army in
mass.

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LIV.1794.
Battle of
Fleurus.

June 26.

Pichegru in
West Flan-
ders attacks
and defeats
Clairfait.Dangerous
situation of
the duke of
York,

with the prince of Orange and general Beaulieu, at Nivelles. The main body of the French army, under Général Jourdain, was posted at this time at Templeuve, Gosselies, and Fleurus, for the purpose of covering the siege of Charleroi. A battle ensued: both armies fought with the most intrepid courage, but the impetuous valour of the French succeeded. The allied army was defeated in every quarter, and forced with immense loss to retreat to Halle, thirty miles from the field of battle*: this victory decided the fate of the campaign. Charleroi, and soon after Brussels, fell into the hands of the victorious enemy. In West Flanders Pichegru was equally successful against Clairfait. Receiving large reinforcements from Lille, he undertook the siege of Ypres, the key of Flanders. The importance of this place induced general Clairfait to hazard the whole corps under his command for its relief. On the 13th of June he attacked the republicans; and drove them from their first position; but fortune soon changed. The ability, courage, and skill of Clairfait were in vain opposed to the immense host of impetuous republicans. After a series of defeats he was compelled to abandon Ypres, to retire to Ghent, while Pichegru overran West Flanders. The geographical reader, by tracing the progress of the French army, and the retreat of the Austrians, and observing the position of the duke of York, will see that he was in a very dangerous situation, surrounded on all sides by the con-

* New Annual Register, 1794, page 333.

quering

quering multitudes of the French troops. Ever since the enemy, by the defeat of Cobourg, were so much advanced on his left, the duke's position had been very perilous; but since the progress of Pichegru upon his right, his post was no longer tenable; he accordingly retired with great expedition to Antwerp. The emperor despairing of success, after in vain endeavouring to raise the people of the Netherlands in mass, returned to Vienna.

Part of the original plan of the campaign had been, as we have already seen, to co-operate with the insurgents of La Vendee. Britain had undertaken, with that view, to send an expedition to France, and proposed to entrust the command to the valour, ability, and conduct of Earl Moira*, who as Lord Rawdon had attained so high military distinction in America. But the suppression of the insurgents, already recorded, prevented this design from being carried into execution. His lordship's army was therefore ordered to Flanders. One illustrious personage, seeking a wider field for the exercise of his vigorous genius and active mind, and wishing to learn the military art from so able a master, desired to serve as a volunteer: this was George prince of Wales. Fitted by natural abilities and acquirements for either the cabinet or the field, the heir apparent from the delicacy of his situation, had cautiously abstained from political business. His present proposition did not, he conceived, interfere with the line of conduct which filial duty had chalked to itself. But his royal parents not deeming it expedient to

Earl Moira is ordered with his army to Flanders. The prince of Wales offers to act under him as a volunteer.

* His lordship had succeeded to that title in the former year by the death of his father.

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It is not
deemed
expedient
to risk the
person of
the heir
apparent.
His lordship
lands at
Ostend; and
finds the
place sur-
rounded by
enemies;

determines
to force
his way to
the duke of
York.

Masterly
execution
and success
of the
design.

risk the person of the heir apparent, the execution of his intention was not permitted. In the latter end of June earl Moira, with ten thousand men, landed at Ostend, just as the Austrians had been obliged to evacuate West Flanders. The French, in the mean time, were advancing upon Ghent in great force, and but little expectation was entertained of general Clairfait's being able to make any effectual resistance in that quarter. In the situation in which the earl of Moira found the affairs of the allies, an alternative occurred, of either defending Ostend, or proceeding to join the duke of York. To succour the confederates, and support the British army, appeared an object of more urgent importance than the precarious possession of a single town; whatever movement was to be made required dispatch, lest the advance of the French armies might completely cut off the communication. A council of war was therefore called by the earl of Moira, and it was determined immediately to evacuate Ostend. This difficult and laborious task was committed to colonel Vyse. On the morning of the 1st of July he began to embark the troops on board the shipping, which lay at single anchor in the harbour, and the baggage and stores were in the vessels before night. The French entered the town as the last detachment embarked. While colonel Vyse was engaged in conducting the evacuation of Ostend, lord Moira with his main army repaired to Malle, about four miles from Bruges, on the great causeway to Ghent. The enemy pressing very fast, nothing was left but the most rapid dispatch. For that purpose they marched without tents and baggage. The French general was extremely

tremely eager to attack this corps; but so skilfully had their masterly leader arranged them on their march, that passing through a country overrun by myriads of enemies elated with victory, and eager for combat, encountering numberless defiles, through flats intersected with canals, and lately inundated, he did not afford them a single opportunity of attack. After undergoing incredible hardships, on the 8th of July he joined the duke of York. Having conducted this important accession of strength in safety to the prince, lord Moira returned to Britain. The French generals were now advancing in all directions through the Netherlands, and the allies were apprehensive that Holland would again become the scene of invasion. The duke of York remained at Antwerp, to afford the Dutch time to strengthen their fortifications, and prepare for a vigorous defence. The prince of Orange, in the beginning of the month, had taken post at Waterloo; and here he was at first successful in repelling an advanced guard of the French. He was soon, however, compelled to abandon this post, by the advance of the republican armies to Brussels. He attempted afterwards to make a stand along the canal of Louvain; but the French bringing up continual reinforcements, he was obliged, with considerable loss, to retreat on the 16th across the Dyle, and established, for a short time, his head-quarters at Nyle. The stadtholder solicited the Dutch, by repeated proclamations, to levy one man in ten throughout the United Provinces. But a great portion of the people were disaffected, and the rest were torpid. The French generals advanced in front of the Dyle towards Louvain. At the Iron Mountain,

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Advances of
the French.

The duke
of York
and prince
of Orange
are obliged
to fall back.

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Mountain, the brave though lately unfortunate Clairfait again attempted an ineffectual resistance, but was completely defeated by general Kleber, with the loss, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, of six thousand men; while the generals Lefevre and Dubois seized on the position of the abbey of Florival. It was at first the intention of the commanders of the combined armies to make a stand at Namur, and to form a line of defence from that city to Antwerp; but these successes of the republicans, and their rapid movements, totally disconcerted this plan. Namur was abandoned by General Beaulieu on the night of the 16th, leaving behind him only two hundred men, who surrendered both the city and citadel on the first summons: a large quantity of artillery was found at Namur. On the 20th, the keys of the city were presented at the bar of the national convention*. In west Flanders the important pass of the Lier was forced about the same time: the French on the 23d sent a trumpeter to inform the inhabitants of Antwerp that they intended to visit them on the succeeding morning, which they did at eleven o'clock, and took quiet possession of that city. The allies had previously set fire to the immense magazines of forage which were there collected. Jourdain and his troops entered Liege, which immediately submitted to the victorious republicans. The fortresses of Lisle and Sluys were speedily captured†; the four towns taken from the French were successively retaken. The Austrians entirely evacuated the Netherlands, which were now overspread

The Austrians entirely evacuated the Netherlands.

* New Annual Register, 1794, page 400.

† Ibid. 401.

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by the republican armies. The British retreated from Antwerp, and in number about twenty-five thousand men proceeded to Breda, which it was determined to defend, and a Dutch garrison was stationed there for that purpose. The right column of the English marched through Breda on the 4th of August, while the left went round the town. They then took a position which had been previously marked out for them, about four miles distant. Having halted several days at Breda, which the prince of Orange was putting into a state of defence, they retreated in the end of August to Bois le-duc, where a Dutch garrison of seven thousand men was posted. In the beginning of September general Pichegru approached with an army of at least eighty thousand men; and the advanced guard of the republicans attacked and stormed the posts on the Dommel, and the village of Boxtel, which though they made a most gallant resistance, found it impossible to withstand the numbers of the enemy. The duke, therefore, with so inferior a force, perceiving his situation totally untenable, on the 16th of September crossed the Meuse, and took a position which had been previously reconnoitred about three miles from Grave. So vigorous had been the resistance of the valiant British, that with twenty-five thousand men they withstood the republicans who were more than eighty thousand, from the beginning of July to the middle of September; in which time they made very inconsiderable advances, where they had the duke of York and his band to combat*. On the Rhine similar

In rapid
stand of the
British on
the frontiers
of Holland,
but they are
compelled
to give way
to immense
superiority
of numbers.

They retreat
behind the
Meuse.

* See Macfarlane, vol. iv. page 489.

success

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Faithlessness
of the king
of Prussia.

success attended the energetic efforts of the republicans. The king of Prussia having long manifested the coldest indifference to the confederacy, had early in this year announced to the German princes his determination to withdraw from the alliance. But Britain, judging of his good faith by her own, had conceived that he would bring into the field the forces for which he had stipulated, and for which he had been paid; in short, that a monarch would not descend to an artifice so totally unbecoming a gentleman, or an honest man, *as to procure the money of other people by false pretences*. But our government and legislature had proceeded on the supposition that Frederic William possessed virtues with which they found by experience he was not endued. The force which he furnished was very inferior to that which he promised, and their efforts were not such as might have been expected from a Prussian army, and were of little avail against the sincere, zealous, and ardent enthusiasm of the republican troops. On the 12th of July, General Michaud attacked the Prussians near Edickhoffen; and, to favour his operations in that quarter, advanced at the same time upon the Austrians before Spire. The contest was long and bloody, and both parties claimed the victory. On the following day the French renewed the attack on the Prussians with redoubled vigour. The battle lasted from early in the morning till nine at night. They attacked seven times, and at length carried by assault, amidst a terrible fire, the important posts fortified and occupied by the Prussians on Platoberg, the highest mountain

Victories
of the
republicans
on the
Rhine.

mountain in the whole territory of Deux Ponts*. The republicans captured great numbers of prisoners, and nine guns, besides ammunition, waggons, and horses. Continuing their series of attacks, the republicans successively defeated the German troops, and compelled them to seek safety by crossing the Rhine†. The emperor, alarmed by such a multiplicity of successes, endeavoured to stimulate the German princes to join him in efficacious measures to defend the empire against the irruption of the republicans; and for that purpose he addressed a memorial to the circles. His own resources, he stated, were utterly inadequate to the contest: the progress of the French was so rapid, that he must be inevitably obliged to withdraw his troops, and station them for the defence of his own frontiers, unless the empire should think proper to oppose the progress of the French with a sufficient force: these exhortations did not produce the desired effect; and no vigorous efforts were made by the empire to second its chief. The suspicion of treachery often springs from discomfiture; and ideas of this sort were very prevalent during this ill-fated campaign. Many of the Austrian officers incurred the imputation: it was said that a considerable number of these were infected with republican principles; and that not a few were corrupted with French gold. As, however, it would exceed the bounds of history to repeat the various surmises of suspicion, concerning which proof was not adduced

Address of
the emperor
to the
German
princes,

is totally
unavailing.

Opinions
of the
operations
and events
of this
campaign.

* New Annual Register, 1794, p. 401.

† Otridge's Annual Register, 1794.

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to ascertain the truth of the rumours, the narrative shall not follow their details. One result however, is, the conduct of the Austrians in many instances was so extremely inconsistent with the military ability which the officers of that nation have generally possessed in a great degree, that it implied either treachery or incapacity. The prince of Cobourg has been severely censured for the operations which terminated in the signal defeat at Fleurus, and the loss of the Netherlands. It was said, that knowing the efficacy of the British troops, he should not have left them at Tournay when he marched to encounter Jourdain: that the addition of such a force would have insured victory: that the plan of separation in which the position of the British troops originated, was very inimical to the objects of the campaign, and very unfit to oppose an enemy whose grand scheme was an extensive and closely connected line of co-operation: that the allies had stationed themselves at three angles of a triangle, while the republicans, by a segment of a circle, at once encompassed the whole, and broke the communication of the parts. These allegations, if true, might be all accounted for without any charge of disaffection against Cobourg, and upon a supposition that will be very generally admitted, that Jourdain and Pichegru, especially the latter, far surpassed Cobourg in inventive powers which formed new combinations adapted to the case. Cobourg, indeed, appears to have been a man of mere tactical experience, without genius, and therefore not fit to cope with skilful men of very great genius. This prince, after the evacuation of the Netherlands, was dismissed

Suspicious
unfavour-
able to the
prince of
Cobourg,

are not
supported
by proof.

missed from his command, not without a rumour of imputed treachery; the truth of which I have no grounds to record as an historical fact; and I myself disbelieve, as his character was fair and honourable; as there is no evidence to support such a charge, and as the disasters of the army under his command appeared to have arisen from the superiority of the French generals, commanding a much more numerous force, inspired by the most ardent enthusiasm, which, whencesoever it arises, has always inspired men to efforts far beyond diplomatic calculation formed on the experience of common wars. The emperor certainly did not receive in the Netherlands, the assistance from his Belgian subjects, the hopes of which probably had a considerable influence in inducing him to visit these dominions. His exhortation to them to rise in mass was indeed very unlikely to be regarded, as they did not conceive that, like the French, they were fighting their own cause. Their object was naturally their own security, and not the aggrandizement of the house of Austria: they did not chuse to rise in mass to fight for a master, though the French had risen in mass to fight for themselves.

After evacuating the Netherlands, general Clairfait, leaving general Latour to cover Maestricht, posted himself at Juliers. Jourdain in the beginning of September prepared to march against Latour; but it was the middle of the month before he was ready for the assault. On the 18th the French in four columns attacked the whole line, from the Aywaille to Emeux. All the passages were forced with the bayonet, and the camps taken

Able
efforts of
Clairfait,

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Victories
of the
republicans.

The republicans reduce the whole left bank of the Rhine.

at full charge. The Austrians left two thousand men dead on the field of battle, and several of their battalions were reduced to one hundred and fifty men. Seven hundred prisoners, twenty-six pieces of large cannon, three pair of colours, one hundred horses, and forty ammunition waggons, were taken, as well as the general's own carriage, his secretary, and papers. The remnant of Latour's army was completely routed and dispersed: general Clairfait having endeavoured without effect to assist Latour, with great skill and ability fortified himself at Juliers; and thither the republicans directed their efforts. On the 29th the French advanced from Aix la Chapelle, crossed the Roer, and attacked all the Austrian general's extensive posts, from Ruremonde to Juliers and Dureu. The conflict lasted the whole of the 29th and 30th of September, and was renewed on the 1st and 2d of October. The battle was extremely fierce on both sides; but Clairfait having lost ten thousand men, found it necessary to retreat as rapidly as possible. Juliers was abandoned to the French, and Clairfait retreated across the Rhine: the republicans conquered Cologne, Wormis, Bonn, and in short reduced the whole left bank of the river. Pichegru, meanwhile was pressing on towards Holland. He informed the national convention, that with two hundred thousand men he would subjugate the United Provinces; and though the whole force which he required was not immediately sent, yet so numerous an addition was dispatched to his army, that he deemed himself able to proceed with his operations. In the beginning of October he invested Bois-le-duc, which

which in a few days surrendered. On the 20th of October, a sharp conflict took place between the republicans and the English, in which, though the event was not decisive, the loss was considerable. The duke of York now crossing the Waal, fell back to Nimeguen; and thither the French multitudes soon followed. The British army was posted to the left of Nimeguen, and the enemy in front of the town, where batteries were erected for the purpose of cannonade and bombardment. On the 4th of November a sortie was made in the night. The troops employed in the sally were about three thousand British, Hanoverians, and Dutch; and their object was to destroy the batteries which were newly constructed to annoy the city. It appears that the French were by some means informed of this design, and were prepared to obstruct its execution. The conflict was extremely obstinate, but our troops were victorious, though with considerable loss. The British general, however, from the immense superiority of the enemy, found it necessary to evacuate Nimeguen. Philippine on the Scheld also surrendered: the French army on the right was fast advancing, and after the victories over the Austrians, laid siege to Maestricht. This city stood a regular investment in the beginning of October. During this month the republicans carried on their approaches, and whilst their parallels were forming, constructed their batteries. They repeatedly summoned the town to surrender; this denunciation having on the 30th been made in vain, the besiegers began to pour a most dreadful shower of shot and shells from all their works, with which

The British gain some advantages, but are greatly outnumbered.

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Winter
campaign
in Holland.Sickness and
mortality of
the British
troops.Intrepid
efforts of
their
exhausted
remains.

they had surrounded the place. This fire, lasting during the whole of the night, demolished many public buildings and private houses, wounded and killed great numbers of the inhabitants. During three days this destructive assault continued: the governor at length, moved by the entreaties of the magistrates and people, entered into a negotiation with general Kleber, and the city capitulated on the 4th of November. After the capture of Nimeguen and Maestricht, the operations were inactive during the rest of the month. But the troops, though not engaged in battles, were exposed to the severest hardships. The winter began with extreme severity: the soldiers were in want of clothing and other necessaries for encountering a winter campaign, which had not been foreseen in time to make adequate provision. In a country so much colder and damper than Britain, that season far exceeded its usual rigour. The consequence was sickness and mortality among the soldiers, augmented by the want of remedies and medical assistance sufficient for such an unexpected prevalence of distemper. It is probable, from the inaction of the French at this time, that they laboured under similar evils. Fresh and numerous reinforcements however, arriving, enabled them in December to proceed with their operations. On the 7th of this month they made a fruitless attempt to cross the Waal in four rafts, from Nimeguen; two of the rafts were sunk by the English forces, who were stationed on the opposite side, near the village of Lant; one floated to the side occupied by the Dutch; and only one of the four regained that which was in the possession of the

the republicans. On the 11th the attempt was renewed, and with better success: they crossed the river above Nimeguen, and near the canal, in boats and on rafts, to the number of about five thousand men. Another detachment, however, attempting the passage, was repulsed with considerable loss. About the middle of December the frost became extremely intense; and in a few days the Maese and the Waal were frozen over. On the 27th the army crossed the river; the duke of York had, together with the prince of Orange, endeavoured to rouse the Dutch to such energetic resistance as had formerly saved their country from French invaders; but the circumstances of the times, and the dispositions of the people, were totally changed. Great numbers of the Dutch were now unwilling to oppose the French, and most of the rest conceived opposition hopeless. The exhortations of the princes were, therefore, altogether unavailing; and the duke of York considered all efforts as useless to save a people not desirous of saving themselves. Seeing military exertions unlikely to be farther useful in that country, he returned to England. The remaining forces were now entrusted to the command of general Walmoden; and an attempt was made to force the enemy to repass the Waal. For this purpose ten battalions of British infantry, with six squadrons of light cavalry, commanded by major general Dundas, assisted by four squadrons and four battalions of Hessians, amounting in all to about six thousand five hundred infantry, and a thousand horse, advanced in three columns. At day break on the 30th of December, attacking a

Attempt
of the
duke of
York and
prince of
Orange to
rouse the
Dutch.

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great body of French at the village of Thuil, they carried it with the bayonet, and drove the republicans across the river. This success, however, was only temporary; the English army was from the dreadful effects of the climate and season, rapidly decreasing. Private liberality was added to public expenditure in sending plentiful supplies of flannel waistcoats, and other fences against the cold; but the inclemency of the frosts was superior to every expedient: the chief part of the army was overcome with sickness. According to the reports of officers who were engaged in this dreadful service, the professional attention bestowed upon the sick was by no means adequate to the effectual discharge of that momentous duty*. In the month of January the French again crossed the Waal with seventy thousand men. This formidable host attacked the remains of the British army, and compelled them, though still making the most gallant resistance, to retire. Without tents, and unable to procure cantonments, the distressed heroes were obliged to pass the night, in this severe season, in the open tobacco sheds, or under the canopy of an inclement sky. The Dutch now urged the stadtholder to conclude a

* The details on this subject, not once or twice mentioned, but very frequently repeated through the periodical works of the time, daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly, and never contradicted, charge the medical department with extreme negligence. But candour must admit, that the prevalence of distemper was much greater than was to be foreseen or expected when the medical appointments were made, and that therefore a less minute attention could be bestowed on every individual patient, than the case required.

peace with the French, and finding him unwilling, their provinces and towns successively offered terms to the republicans, which were accepted. Zealand, and soon after Holland, entered into a capitulation. The stadtholder with much difficulty escaped from the Hague with his family, sought and found refuge in England: by the beginning of February the provinces had concluded a treaty with the French. As the republicans now possessed all the country between the British army and the coast of Holland, it was impossible to retreat in that direction; they, therefore, were obliged to take a much more circuitous rout towards the north coast of Germany. They repeatedly occupied strong positions, not with the vain intention of making a stand against three times their number, but to secure their retreat. Therein they had also to encounter many other difficulties. The partial thaws which occasionally took place only served to aggravate the misery of the troops, from the floods which succeeded these alterations in the temperature, and either impeded their progress, or obliged the soldiers to wade through torrents of mud and water, which sometimes reached even to their knapsacks. In this dreadful situation they were obliged to continue their march, or to be overwhelmed by the enemy. After a rout perhaps unequalled in the annals of military hardship, the exhausted remains of our army arrived at Bremen; and, having halted for some weeks, they embarked for England.

Immense superiority of numbers forces the English to evacuate Holland, which yields to the French arms.

Such was the melancholy termination of the British expedition to the continent; so little did the

expences,

Campaign of 1794 disastrous to the British army.

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expences, preparations, and military equipments of two years answer the purposes for which they were undertaken. Britain had gone to war to prevent an attack upon the rights of Dutch navigation : instead of one river, the whole seven provinces were now commanded by the republicans. She had gone to war to prevent French aggrandizement : one campaign had given France an accession of territory fertile, productive, and opulent, far surpassing all the conquests of her most ambitious and successful monarchs.

In Italy and Spain the republicans were successful as far as they employed their efforts : their exertions, however, in Piedmont, were not important. On the confines of Spain they made rapid advances : the Spanish government attempted to raise the subjects in mass ; but this was an expedient that could succeed only in countries where the people, either being or conceiving themselves free, were inspired by the ardour of liberty.

From such an issue to the efforts of the confederation, persons that did not exactly consider the specific case might very naturally draw unjust inferences. Such might conclude, that because the combination in question had been unsuccessful, that no future union for suppressing dangerous ambition could be successful, and therefore that the attempt would be vain. Were a concert to be proposed for reducing the exorbitant power of France, the events of 1794 might be quoted as warnings that the scheme would be impracticable ; and assuredly the same means and conduct in similar circumstances would be unavailing. If the continental powers, pretend-
ing

ing to join, were really to pursue different and even contrary objects ; and if the French were inspired by the same spirit which, during their republican enthusiasm, animated and invigorated their exertions, the issue would certainly be discomfiture to the nominal coalition of really discordant parts. But if they were to unite in head, heart, and hand, to pursue an object which many might think more important for their ultimate safety than paltry indemnities ; and if it were to happen that they had not to contend against enthusiasm, but torpid indifference, it would by no means follow that the events of 1794 would be repeated. Even respecting Holland singly, it would be extremely hasty to deduce a general conclusion from the untoward issue of this disastrous campaign. The reduction of Holland did not arise merely from the arms of Pichegru, but in a great degree from the Dutch themselves. The majority of them were democratical, and received the French not only without opposition, but with gratitude and joy, as their deliverers and brothers. They might have withstood Pichegru when assisted by the gallant English, as without any assistance they withstood Turenne and Conde ; and with much less aid they discomfited Alva and Parma. The Dutch have clearly manifested, that, if they exert themselves, no foreign power can keep their country in subjection, or even dependence. Should it ever happen that they chuse to assert their independence, there is little doubt that they will be successful : whenever they have the will they have the power to be free.

Signal as had been the disasters of the British armies on the continent, where she acted alone, unincumbered

Signal successes of Britain where she fought alone.

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Her fleets
paramount
in the Me-
diterranean.Acquisi-
tions in the
West Indies.Operations
of Earl
Howe and
the channel
fleet.

incumbered with allies, and on her appropriate theatre, her success was momentous, and her glory transcendent. In the choice of naval commanders, our minister; through the war, has uniformly considered instrumentality; fitness for discharging the duties, and accomplishing the purposes of the appointment. The various commands, supreme and subordinate, were conferred on professional ability and character. Three powerful armaments were prepared for the campaign of 1794: one under Lord Hood commanded the Mediterranean, reduced the island of Corfica, and protected the coasts of Spain and Italy: a second, under Sir John Jervis, with a military force headed by Sir Charles Grey, reduced Martinico, Guadaloupe, St. Lucia, and some parts of St. Domingo. But the most illustrious monument of British naval glory was raised by Earl Howe. During the preceding part of the war, France, conscious of her maritime inferiority to Great Britain, had hitherto confined her exertions to cruizers and small squadrons for harassing our trade. In the month of May, the French were induced to depart from this system of naval warfare. Anxious for the safety of a convoy daily expected from America, conveying an immense supply of corn and flour, of naval stores and colonial productions, the Brest fleet, amounting to twenty-seven ships of the line ventured to sea under the command of Rear-admiral Villaret. Lord Howe expecting the same convoy, went to sea with twenty ships of the line. On the 28th May he descried the enemy to windward. Admiral Pasley in the evening gave signal to the vanmost ships to attack the enemy's rear.

Lord

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Lord Hugh Seymour Conway attacked the Revolutionary of 120 guns, and being soon supported by Captain Parker of the Audacious, so damaged the enemy's ship that she struck ; but escaping during the night, she was towed into Rochfort. The next morning the fleets resumed the conflict, but the intermission of a thick fog prevented its continuance. The fog lasted that and the greater part of the two following days. The sun occasionally breaking through the mist, shewed to each other the direction of the fleets ; and Lord Howe employed this time in most masterly manœuvres to obtain the weather-gage, that he might compel them to fight when the atmosphere should clear, and at length he succeeded. On the 1st of June, the fog being dispersed, our admiral, from his former excellent dispositions, found an opportunity of bringing the French to battle. Between seven and eight in the morning, our fleet advanced in a close and compact line : the enemy finding an engagement unavoidable, received our onset with their accustomed valour. A close and desperate engagement ensued, presenting the French as combatants worthy of occupying the naval heroism of England. The Montague of 130 guns, the French admiral's ship having adventured to encounter the Queen Charlotte of 100, was, in less than an hour, compelled to fly : the other ships of the same division seeing all efforts ineffectual against British prowess, endeavoured to follow the flying admiral ; ten, however, were so crippled that they could not keep pace with the rest : but many of the British ships were so damaged that some of these disabled ships of the enemy effected their escape. Six

Skilful manœuvre to bring the enemy to battle.

Battle of the 1st of June.

Numbers, force, and courageous efforts of the enemy, unavailing against the British fleet.

Decisive, glorious, and momentous victory.

remained in the possession of the British admiral, and were brought safe into Portsmouth, viz. La Juste of 80 guns, La Sans Pareille of 80 guns, L'America 74, L'Achille 74, L'Impetueux 74, and Northumberland 74: these, with Le Vengeur, which was sunk, made the whole loss of the French amount to seven ships of the line. The victorious ships arrived safe in harbour with their prizes: the crews, officers, and admiral were received with those grateful thanks and high applauses which Britain never fails to bestow on her conquering heroes. Earl Howe was by all ranks and parties extolled for his tactical skill, steady perseverance, and determined courage; first, in forcing the enemy, after every evasion, to a close action; and then in obtaining so signal an advantage over a fleet superior in its number of ships and of men, as well as in size and weight of metal*. The year 1794, surpassing in disaster by land the unfortunate 1777† or 1781‡, by sea equalled the glories of 1759.

* See Macfarlane's history, vol. iv. p. 461.

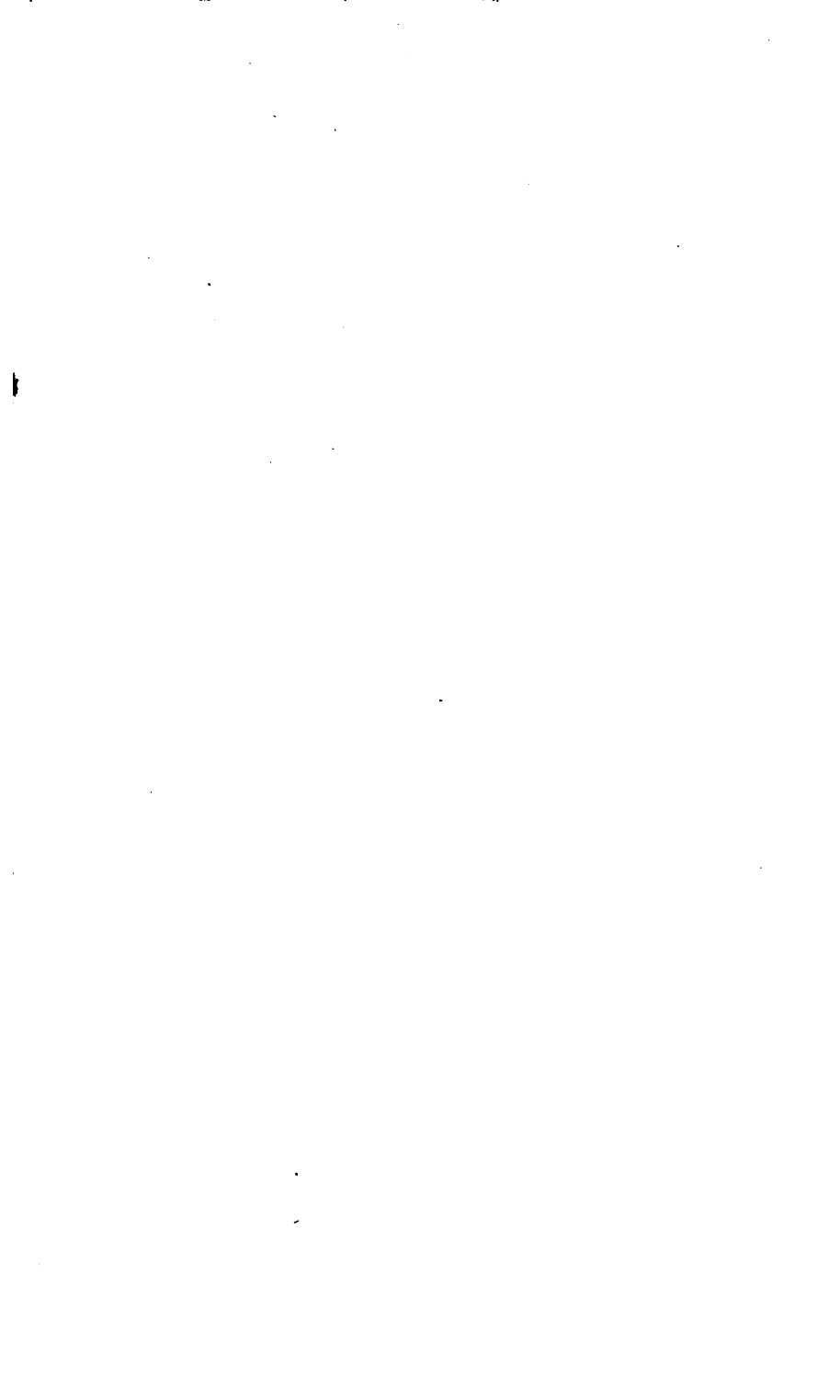
† Capture of Burgoyne's army. ‡ Cornwallis's army.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.



1764

JP



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